

Gideon – might man of God

ODCC 05/07/09 (x.pages)

Text: Judges 6:1-14

Introduction

1. I have to admit that for most of my life Gideon has been my greatest Bible hero – there are plenty of other heroes but as a young boy Gideon’s call, his attitude about himself (diffidence), his doubt as he tested God and then his faith and he trusted God.
 - a. We can learn so much from the lives of the men and women we read of in God’s Word and each of them is recorded specifically for us to study as examples.
 - b. Study the life of King Saul and the life of King David who succeeded him – don’t be like Saul, be like David.
 - c. And yet even in David’s life there were some negative things where we ask, “How did such a Godly man let that happen?”
2. Our own lives are under scrutiny. We are told in Hebrews, “*Since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us*” (Heb 12:1).
 - a. There are various interpretations as to what that means but it says, to me, that there are examples of faith that whose lives we ought to emulate.
 - b. It says that our own lives are being observed, by the world, by our colleagues, by our family, by other Christians, by the Lord;
 - c. And one day we will give an account of our lives to Jesus Christ – not for judgement but that we may know how we have contended, how we have run the race and the Lord will reward each of us on that day.

The state of the nation

1. We find that Israel are in dire straits. It says that because of their unfaithfulness and sinfulness God had used their enemies as a means of discipline.
 - a. The bizarre thing is that nearly 200 years earlier, Israel had won great battles against the Midianites and all but wiped them out.
 - b. Now here, cold towards God, acting like disobedient children and living undisciplined lives, the tables are turned and the Midianites have increased in number and are wreaking havoc upon the people of God.
 - c. The Midianites are so numerous and so destructive. The picture is of a piece of rotting meat on a summers day that attracts hundreds of flies. Now see the land of Israel literally swarming with Midianites plundering and impoverishing the people of God.
2. It was so bad that they could hardly live in their cities and villages because our text says that they had to shelter in the hills and in caves.
 - a. They hardly had enough to eat because the Midianites destroyed their crops and their vineyards and their cattle and sheep.
 - b. Realising their inability to overcome the Midianites the Israelites cried out to God for help and God sent them a prophet to explain why they were in this predicament.
 - c. It seems as if it made no difference. They certainly didn’t repent. They didn’t destroy their idols and turn from their false gods. They didn’t put their hearts right and God and mend their relationship with God.
3. The lessons are obvious. “*Follow me,*” said Jesus (Jn 12:26). And, “*I am the vine, you are the branches... abide in me*” (Jn 15:1-8). “*Live as children of light*” Paul tells us (Eph 5:8).
 - a. How does God want me live? His word has all the instructions I need. And His Spirit has been sent as a kind of instructor and guide to lead me into that life.
 - b. What does God want for my life? He’s laid out a race, a course. It includes good works, a ministry, gifts, talents (as the parable describes them) which God wants me to invest in the Kingdom of God and receive a return.
 - c. Spiritually my life will become impoverished if I neglect these things and I might find myself weak and ineffective.

The angel and Gideon

1. Gideon is threshing wheat in a wine press. He's not doing it in the normal way because he only has a little wheat. This is indicative in picture form of a problem:
 - a. You're not supposed to thresh wheat in a winepress but trample grapes. The winepress is dry. The wine is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. There is a spiritual dryness in the land. There's a lot of religion but none of it of the Spirit of God.
 - b. There's only a little wheat. Wheat or bread is symbolic of the Word of God. There's hardly any of it and the people are hungry for God's word without even realising it.
2. While Gideon is busy the angel of the Lord comes to him and says, "*The LORD is with you, mighty warrior.*" We don't know much about him but there's nothing to indicate that Gideon was a mighty warrior.
 - a. What does God see in you that you do not see in yourself or others do not see in you?
 - b. What could I be if I pursued the plan of God for my life. The apostle Paul said, "*I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me*" (Phil 3:12-14).
3. Gideon's response to the angel indicates what kind of heart he had because he asks, "*Where are all his wonders that our fathers told us about when they said, 'Did not the LORD bring us up out of Egypt?'*"
 - a. There was a cry from Gideon's heart and he was asking, God, where are you in all this?"
 - b. The prophet Habakkuk had the same thing on his heart hundreds of years later when he also prayed, "*LORD, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, O LORD. Renew them in our day, in our time make them known; in wrath remember mercy*" (3:2).
 - c. It seems to me that the power of God and the presence of God is not as obvious as it was when I was younger. I could spend hours telling you of the things I have witnessed but today, if I'm honest, it seems to me as if God has gone somewhat quiet – not altogether quiet but somewhat.
 - d. I often pray to God and tell him I could serve Him for another 100 years or still a 1000 years even if I never saw the power God **BUT** I long to see God's power because God's power:
 - i. destroys the works of the enemy
 - ii. it sets the captives free
 - iii. it brings healing to body, mind and spirit
 - iv. it brings salvation – light to the blind, hearing to the deaf, life to the dead
 - v. He stops the mouths of the mocker, and gives the foolish wisdom
 - vi. He turns weakness into strength and doubt into faith
 - vii. He gives a reason to live and a hope for the future.

Gideon's power

1. God said to Gideon, "*Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand. Am I not sending you?*" That seems like a bit of a joke because Gideon had no strength so if he went in his own strength he was doomed to failure.
 - a. But, actually, he did have strength. What strength? The same strength as Abraham had – Gideon believed in God – he did not believe in himself, he believed in God.
 - b. Gideon knew exactly how small he really was. He said, "I belong to the most insignificant clan, and I am the least in my clan."
 - c. As long as we can stay small in our own eyes but keeping God BIG before us, then our confidence will never be in me but always in God.
2. I remember reading one commentator who said of this passage that the picture that the original Hebrew gives is not that of Gideon going out and God going with but it is a picture of God going out and Gideon going with.
 - a. It wasn't even that Gideon was clothed with the Spirit of God (although our English indicates that) but that the Holy Spirit had a job to do and clothed Himself with Gideon much like we put on a coat.
 - b. Is there a yearning in your own heart to see the power of God? Is this something you are praying about? Is there a willingness on your part for God to use you?