

GIDEON'S VICTORY

Int.

1. Aim: To explain the story about Gideon and point out some lessons for us today as Christians.
2. 1 Cor. 10:11 NKJV "Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come." ESV "Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come."
3. We can learn a lot from experience. It is a good teacher.
 - a. We can also learn from the experience of others.
 - b. Education is knowledge passed from the experience of others.
 - c. Education - The process by which society transmits its knowledge, skills and values from one generation to another.
4. Rom. 15:4 "For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." ESV "For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope."
 - a. God intended that all generations should learn from these events recorded in the OT
 - b. A study of the history of those people in the O.T. will be beneficial for us today.
5. In this lesson we will learn from the experience of a man called Gideon
 - a. Judges 6-7 - Israel was in bondage to Midianites
 - b. He was the fifth Judge of the nation of Israel - he was a great character
 - c. Gideon was known as a "Mighty man of valor" - 40 years as Judge

Discussion

I. THE STORY OF GIDEON - Judges 6-7

A. Chapter 6 - Setting of story

1. V. 1 - People did evil again, = therefore delivered into hands of Midianites for 7 years.
2. V. 2 - Hid in caves - hunted like wild beasts
3. V. 3-6 - The multitude of the enemy took the land and everything in it. Israelites in Poverty.
4. V. 7 - They cried to the Lord for Help
5. V. 8-10 - Prophet sent -- God brought you forth and because you disobeyed you have been in this condition, but do not fear He will bring you forth again.

B. Selection of Gideon

1. V. 11 - Angel came to Gideon, son of Joash, while he thrashed wheat by the winepress for fear of Midianites.
2. V. 12 - Angel spoke, Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor.
3. V. 13 - Gideon asks -- If the Lord is with us then why are we in such a condition.
4. V. 14 - Angel said, Go and thou shalt save Israel from this.
5. V. 15 - Gideon said he was poor and had not many in his family.
6. V. 16 - Angel assured Him that God would be with Him.
7. V. 17 - Gideon wanted a sign to know for sure.
8. V. 18 - Gideon told the angel to wait, angel tarried.
9. V. 19 - Prepared feast and brought to angel under oak tree.
10. V. 20 - Angel told him to lay it on rock and pour broth on it.

11. V. 21 - Then the angel touched it with staff and consumed by fire.
12. V. 22 - Gideon understood it was an angel of the Lord, then he was afraid he would die since he had seen the angel
13. V. 23 - Lord told him he would not die.
14. V. 24 - Gideon built an altar to God and called it "Jehovah is my peace."

C. Baal Overthrown by Gideon

1. V. 25 - Lord told him to throw down altar of Baal and destroy the grove.
2. V. 26 - Build an altar to God and sacrifice bullock on it.
3. V. 27 - Gideon and ten servants obeyed by night.
4. V. 28-29 - Men arose and saw it and accused Gideon of it.
5. V. 30 - They spoke to his father and asked him to bring his son that he might die for this deed.
6. V. 31 - Joash said if Baal be a god let him avenge his own injuries.
7. V. 32 - Jerubbaal - let Baal plead or contend.
8. V. 33 - Hearing of Gideon's deeds the Midianites and the Amalekites were preparing for battle.

D. Proof to Gideon of God's Help

1. V. 34-35 - God spoke to Gideon again.
2. V. 36-40 - Proof to Gideon that God was with them -- miracle of fleece and dew.

E. Chapter 7 Selection of Army

1. V. 1 - Jerubaal - same as Gideon, with army of 32,000 - pitched against the enemy who had 135,000 [4 to 1 odds] Judges 8:10
2. V. 2 - Lord said he had too many lest they feel they saved themselves, they must decrease the number.
3. V. 3 - Tell those afraid to return - 22,000 left 135,000 for enemy [13 to 1 odds]
4. V. 4 - Lord said they still had too many - test 10,000 too many
5. V. 5 - He that laps as a dog, set to self, and those that bow down set aside.
6. V. 6 - 300 lapped as a dog, put their hands to their mouth.
7. V. 7 - All others were to leave - had his army of 300!!! [450 to 1 odds]

F. Training of Army

1. V. 8 - These 300 got their trumpets and victuals and left to fight.
2. V. 9 - Go down and take them - I have delivered them unto thee
3. V. 10-11 - If you fear take your servant down and spy out the place.
4. V. 12-14 - They went down and heard of the dream and interpretation
5. V. 15 - Convinced him that God had delivered them into his hand.

G. Preparation and the Battle

1. V. 16 - Divided into three companies, all had a trumpet, pitcher, and lamp
2. V. 17-18 - Gideon instructs the men on what to do and say
3. V. 19 - Gideon and 300 men blow trumpets and break pitchers.
4. V. 20 - All 300 did the same and cried out "The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon."

5. V. 21 - Every man stood in his place and the Midianites destroyed themselves and fled.
6. V. 22 - The 300 blew their trumpets and the enemy fled.
7. V. 23 - The Israelites pursued them.
8. V. 24 - They met them at the fords of the Jordan River.
9. V. 25 - Captured two of the princes, and brought heads to Gideon on the other side of Jordan.

II. STRUGGLES OF GIDEON

- A. From the life of Gideon we are able to discover that he faced many struggles which we face today.
 1. He experienced these major struggles even though he was one of the greatest leaders of God in Israel.
 2. Here are some of the struggles which we share in common with this great leader.
- B. **Gideon struggled with trusting God's - Judges 6:13,17,36-40; 7:9-11**
 1. When you look at how Gideon reacted to God's assurances you read words like, "If," "But," "Why," "Where."
 - a. The opening conversation between Gideon and God reveals that Gideon did not place much trust in God's assurances.
 - b. If we suggested a paraphrase of 6:13 it would read, "You have to be kidding! The Lord is not with us. I know what my father told me about the wonders which God performed for my father's fathers, but that was then not now! God cannot be with us. He must have abandoned us!"

- c. Here is a man filled with doubt. He knows what has happened in the past but he just cannot bring himself to place full confidence in believing God can work similar deeds in the present
 - d. Gideon's problem was not lack of knowledge; he knew well what God had done.
 - (1) His problem was lack of faith and obedience!
 - (2) Gideon's faith was not constant.
 - (3) Gideon, because he did not trust in the assurances of God's Word, was doubtful, uncertain, and skeptical as to whether God's promises would ever come true!
2. I am afraid that far too many of us are like Gideon in this point.
- a. We KNOW what the Bible says. We have been taught from early childhood about the promises of God, but we cannot place full trust in these promises!
 - b. When we hit a snag in life and are stopped by some obstacle, the immediate question which crosses our lips is, "Where is God? How can He possibly be with me now? Surely He has deserted me!"
 - c. The temptation to question God's assurances is the greatest when everything goes wrong.
 - d. What happens when we have a "bad" day? Far too often our reaction to troubling situations is to join Gideon in the wine-press and refuse to admit that God is with us.
3. The Apostle Paul addressed this problem in 2 Corinthians 4:7-5:10.
- a. There you find a catalogue of trials and tragedies that befell him, yet he endured.

- b. Paul's ability to endure was found in his determination not to forget that God had promised to always be present.
 - c. Paul walked by "faith and not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7).
 - d. He could rest in the assurance that if God's power was great enough to raise up Christ, that same power would be able to fulfill its divine promises (4:14-18).
4. When we are tempted to question the assurances of God — DO NOT go into the wine-press with Gideon! Trust in confident faith with the Apostle Paul.

C. Gideon struggled with inferiority - Judges 6:15

1. As God's commands came for Gideon to assume leadership, Gideon saw no qualifications for accepting the role. Felt Unqualified
 - a. Gideon could very well have asked, "Why me? How can I do that?"
 - b. I am sure that Gideon was convinced God was making a big mistake.
 - c. He was confident that he could not do the job!
2. Once again we discover a point where many of us are like Gideon.
 - a. God commands a task to be done. As we read the command in the Scriptures we respond, "I know that job must be done, but I am not qualified. That job is just too much for me!"
 - b. We fail, just as Gideon, to remember the assurances of God.
 - c. The same God who commands us to "go" says, "Have I not sent you? . . . Surely I will be with you."

3. The closing words of our blessed Lord remind us that His presence is with us always - Matthew 28:20
 - a. If you need to be reminded of God's available strength turn and read Philippians 4:13,19 and rest assured that the same divine power is available to Christians today.
 - (1) Phil. 4:13 "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."
 - (2) Phil. 4:19 "And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."
 - b. I think it is interesting to note that when God gave Gideon the commanded duty, God did not accept any excuses!
 - c. Now, if God was not willing to accept Gideon's excuses He certainly will not accept excuses we offer Him today either.

4. Whenever you are faced with a task that appears to be beyond your capability, remember that if you cannot you serve a God who can!
 - a. And once we develop trust and confidence in God's abilities we will develop confidence in our abilities.
 - b. "And we have such trust through Christ toward God. 5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God," - 2 Corinthians 3:4-5

D. Gideon struggled with fear - Judges 6:27; 7:10

1. This brave, courageous leader was scared!
 - a. He was afraid of those closest to him.
 - b. He knew that his actions would alienate friends and relatives.
 - c. As he faced the Midianites he was fearful.
 - d. But he was willing to serve God and because of willing service his fear was overcome.
2. Look at your own fears.
 - a. Do you ever feel this fear?
 - b. Are you ever afraid that when you take a stand for the gospel you will alienate friends and even relatives?
 - c. Have you ever started knocking doors with an empty, churning feeling in your stomach?
3. We need to realize that fear is a common foe to those who are members of the Lord's body.
 - a. The Devil can use fear to impede our effectiveness and cause us to become delinquent if we do not check it at the beginning.
 - b. As Paul wrote to Timothy he said, "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. 8 Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord," - 2 Timothy 1:7,8a NKJV
 - c. Paul was aware of how fear could hinder the servants of Christ.
 - d. As he entered the great city of Corinth Paul suffered a depressing defeat as his fellow Jews rejected the gospel message.

- e. He began working out of the house of Titus Justus and saw wonderful results.
 - f. But something must have happened which caused Paul to experience fear. The Lord appeared to him in a vision and said, "Be not afraid, but speak and hold not thy peace" - Acts 18:5-11
 - g. As Paul later wrote to the Corinthians he said, "I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling" - 1 Corinthians 2:3
4. The fear of both Gideon and Paul was overcome by obedience.
- a. God did not remove their fears but He enabled them to overcome them!
 - b. Such is true today. It is certain that many of us will experience fear when we take the gospel message to friends, relatives, or strangers.
 - c. God will not magically dispel our fears but He will provide us with strength so that we can overcome our fears by fruitful service!

Conclusion

1. In spite of these struggles the Bible says that Gideon did much good in Israel!
2. He is mentioned in Heb. 11:32 in the Great Hall of Faith.
3. It is comforting to know that even someone with these great struggles can do much good.
4. We discover a wonderful lesson about God — God accepts our doubts and offers us strength to overcome doubts and fears in our lives.
 - a. In 6:14 the phrase "looked upon" [KJV] literally suggests a gracious turning toward, a look of tender favor.

- b. Even when *Gideon* demonstrated skepticism and wavering faith in the promises of God, God still looked upon him with tender favor.
 - c. When God looked at *Gideon* He was able to see what *Gideon* could become.
 - d. He was aware of the weaknesses, doubts, and failings of *Gideon*, but God accepted him.
5. God can take us, and like *Gideon*, make us strong and courageous soldiers in His army.
- a. We discover that struggles will weary us but we must follow the example of *Gideon* who was "weary yet pursuing" to conquer the enemy and accomplish his God-given role (8:4).
 - b. Paul says it like this, "Let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" - Galatians 6:9,10; 1 Corinthians 15:58
6. We discover that when our struggles are answered with God's assurances, we need to immediately turn a grateful thanksgiving to God in worship.
- a. Even though *Gideon's* faith wavered, he was ready to pause and thank God for renewed courage no matter where he was - Judges 7:15
 - b. When we overcome some struggle let us make sure that we do not hesitate in offering a prayer of thanksgiving to God!
7. Let us learn from *Gideon's* life and persevere in the face of struggles in our lives. Let us lean for strength upon the One whose strength will overcome all adversity.
8. *Gideon's* victory was really God's Victory
- a. God wanted them to understand that with only 300 men they could not have really been victorious unless God was with them.
 - b. God wants us to realize that we can be victorious also but only with His Help.

Sources Consulted

1. Notes on Judges
 2. **Studies in Judges** by John L. Kachelman, Jr. P. 88-92
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Sermon by Arthur Pigman - Sunday Morning Jan. 10, 2010
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