

A Trumpet, a Vessel and a Lamp

Judges 7:16-18

As I sat last week in our Northwest Valley of Assembly of God churches yearly meeting, and was elected by my peers to serve as Assistant Presbyter, the story of Gideon and his 300 men came to my mind. Maybe because it's an example of God using the little and unimportant to overcome the enemy.

The story of Gideon's small army has a lot to say for those who would serve in the Lord's army.

In chapters (6&7) of the Book of Judges we find the story of Gideon, who the Angel of God called in (6:12) "A mighty man of valor".

His story is almost unbelievable simply because Gideon was not a fierce warrior or a great military commander. He was simply a farmer who was hiding his small wheat crop from the Midianites who had conquered Israel. He was hiding behind a winepress while threshing his wheat when the angel of the Lord came to him.

Gideon wasn't prepared to take the reins of commanding an army. He was leading a simple life, existing from day to day as God provided him the means to do so. He just went about his daily routine, plowing, planting and harvesting and never once thought of becoming a deliverer of his people. In his own eyes he was nothing. He had no power within himself, no knowledge of warfare and tactics, no education in the use of weaponry, and no ability to lead men into battle. In other words, he was just a common citizen trying to get by the best way he knew how.

But God saw something in this man Gideon that no one else could see!

God saw that Gideon was nothing in his own eyes as well as the eyes of other men. Gideon was the least likely, of all his brethren of Israel, since he even said (6:15) that he was the least among his tribe, the Tribe of Manasseh, and that his family was poorest even among that small, poor tribe. Yet God called Gideon according to His purpose.

1 Corinthians 1:26-29 (NKJV)

For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence.

Paul reminds us that God's view of who is useful to his Kingdom is so very different from our own!

We look for those who have talent or those who are influential.

We look for those who are great speakers and those of high education.

We look for those who everyone would call, “beautiful people”, because we think that somehow the fleshly appearance and ability will draw big crowds will bring down the Spirit of God in a special way.

Let me tell you that God doesn't look for what we look for in those that He will use. God looks for a willing vessel, but more than that, God looks for that willing vessel that is aware that it's broken and powerless without him.

I believe all of us pray to be more like Jesus. All of us have whispered a prayer in some fashion that says to God, “*Make me what you would have me to be. Let there be less of me and my desires so that more of you may be made manifest through me and let your desires become mine.*” Every Christian who truly wants a close walk with Jesus will say that prayer again and again.

Tommy Tenney says in his book *God's Eye View*, “*Less is Better and Nothing is Best.*”

What he is saying is that God will only use those vessels that are powerless to take any credit for what God wants to do through their lives. God will not share his glory with any man and no man can say that he did anything to accomplish anything for God. God will wait and allow us to drain all of our resources, to use all of our abilities, to exhaust our strength, and come to the end of our rope. Then, when we have done all we can do to no avail, and we bow our heads in surrender to Him, **that's** when God will take over to move on our behalf to accomplish his will.

God chooses to use these earthen vessels called this body of flesh. It is an imperfect, corrupted body that is destined to return to the dirt of the earth and yet God will use this flesh to fulfill his will. He has placed His spirit within our hearts, a perfect Lord living inside an imperfect earthen vessel.

Judges 7:16 (NKJV)

Then he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put a trumpet into every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and torches inside the pitchers.

Gideon's army of 300 men was divided into 3 groups and every man was given a trumpet. The trumpets were likely left behind when all the other soldiers had returned home under God's direction.

Now 300 men blowing a trumpet all at once would be the sound to the enemy that many more men would be with each trumpeter. Trumpets, like bugles of the US Cavalry, were used to signal the attack of a large body of men. Trumpets were loud so all the men of a large army could hear the signal. So the Midianites would imagine that there were at least 300 companies of soldiers coming down upon them.

God has given each of us, as earthen vessels for his service, a trumpet that we must sound also.

We are given a voice and an ability to communicate to the devil and his kingdom that God's army is on the move. We have him surrounded and we are on the offense. Each of us can and should shout out. Each of us can use our instrument to sound the Charge! Each of us being anointed by the power of the Holy Spirit can call down the armies of Heaven to defeat our enemy.

It's no wonder that Satan fears even the youngest Christian who knows how to call upon the name of the Lord in times of trouble.

Hell's greatest fear is the prayers that God's people pray because Satan knows that God hears and answers prayer.

2 Corinthians 10:3-6 (NKJV)

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

The weapons of our warfare are God's weapons, spiritual in nature, and against them Hell has no defense.

We have the Word of the Lord, sharper than a two-edged sword that can cut through the devil's devices and condemn his schemes to a point of ineffectiveness. We have the Sword of the Spirit, the power of God within us, the anointing of the Holy Spirit, that allows us to speak as though it is God himself and the devil cannot stand against that.

We have the shield of Faith to stop every fiery attack that Satan can cast at us. There are no weapons in the arsenal of Satan's power that is effective against the shield of Faith. They are all simply extinguished every time he tries to use them.

Isaiah 54:16-17 (NKJV)

No weapon formed against you shall prosper, And every tongue which rises against you in judgment You shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, And their righteousness is from Me," Says the Lord.

Yet God won't place those spiritual weapons in the hands of carnally minded people who will try to abuse them and then claim the glory for what is done. God chooses to use those who are totally surrendered to him. God chooses to use those who are less than nothing in their own sight. He chooses to use those who know that it is not by their might or power but by the Spirit of God that the victory will come.

2 Corinthians 4:7 (NKJV)

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.

Then Gideon took those 300 men, each with a trumpet in one hand and handed them an empty pitcher made of clay in the other hand. Inside each pitcher he placed a lamp, or small torch. When he gave the command, they would strike their pitchers against one another causing a loud sound and breaking the pitcher and the light of the torches would suddenly burst forth to light their path to the enemy's camp.

This would frighten the Midianites because they knew that not every soldier carried a torch into battle. Only a few would light the way while most would follow with their weapons drawn for battle.

Church, WE are those earthen vessels and inside of each of us God has placed His light of the Gospel. God's conviction power breaks our hard heart, crushes and destroys that outer shell of humanity, and makes us into a broken vessel that he can use for his glory.

Then just like Gideon's men, after all the power of the flesh has been broken, his light bursts forth from the inside out so that all the world can see how that our lives become a bright light in a sin-darkened world.

We cast that light everywhere we go and wherever the light shines forth, the darkness must flee.

Satan lives in the darkness of sin and the light that shines from within, emanating from the power and presence of God in us, causes him to flee in fear of God.

That's why all we need to do is just resist the devil and he will flee from us.

There is something else that I want to show you in this story of Gideon.

Judges 7:17-18 (NKJV)

And he said to them, "Look at me and do likewise; watch, and when I come to the edge of the camp you shall do as I do: When I blow the trumpet, I and all who are with me, then you also blow the trumpets on every side of the whole camp, and say, 'The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!'"

Gideon's orders were simple but vitally important. No one was to make a move without his direct orders. Their success was fully dependent upon obedience to God's commands to Gideon and relied upon the element of surprise.

Our victory in working for the Lord is also completely dependent upon complete obedience to God's timing and direction. If we are to be useful in building the church, it has to be under God's direction. If we are going to accomplish anything it has to be God's way. We had better be prayed up and in tune with the Spirit of the Lord or we may find ourselves facing defeat.

God's plan won't fail but our plan will.

The Israelites chose to stay in the desert because **they** refused to obey God's direction.

Psalm 127:1 (NKJV)

Unless the Lord builds the house, They labor in vain who build it; Unless the Lord guards the city, The watchman stays awake in vain.

Finally, we must take note of "what" the army of Gideon was to shout after they broke their pitcher and let their light shine and blew their trumpets.

"The Sword of the LORD, and of Gideon."

Gideon didn't put his name before the name of the Lord.

He knew it was God's sword, God's battle and God's victory. He made sure that God received all the glory for this miraculous victory. Gideon's name was added almost as an afterthought for the sake of those in the camp of the Midianites who had heard his name before and feared his power from God.

Interestingly, in the Midianites camp, a rumor had been spreading about a dream that God had given to them.

In the dream a barley cake had rolled down the hill and destroyed a Midianite tent. The Midianites, interpreted that dream to mean that the small army of Gideon in comparison to them, was going to utterly destroy them. That dream would come true because God put fear in their camp.

Thus when Gideon's name was called in a shout of charge, panic struck the camp of the Midianites for the dream of their destruction was coming true. God's plan for battle is aided by the fact that God also knows and controls the actions of his enemies. They could not stand against his power.

And so it also happens with those who love Jesus and live their lives under the anointing and directing power of the Holy Spirit.

How often do we hear of great people of faith that have tremendous revivals where multitudes are saved, healed and delivered by the power of God? There are still men and women of God who move and minister under the anointing power of the Holy Spirit and the powers of Hell know their names.

When the 7 sons of Sceva attempted to cast out a demon without the anointing of the Holy Spirit the evil spirit didn't flee.

Acts 19:15 (NKJV)

And the evil spirit answered and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?"

Those demons knew Paul, not because Paul was such a great man, but because they knew that the anointing of the Holy Spirit was upon Paul and that Paul had power and authority in God – and God was who they really feared!

Your name, my name, or the name of any other person doesn't mean a thing by itself, but when you carry that anointing with you, and when you speak God's will and God's Word, in God's way, then all the powers of Hell will take note of who you are and they will shudder when your name is mentioned because they know that you have power with God as his child.

God has placed his glowing light of the gospel within our bodily earthen vessels.

He has placed a trumpet in your hands to preach the message of salvation and deliverance to everyone you meet, and he has given you the sword of the Lord through the Word of God.

It's time to break this earthly vessel of clay and surrender to God. Allow God to use you to strike fear into the powers of darkness and defeat the enemy on his own ground.

Jeremiah 20:11 (NKJV)

But the Lord is with me as a mighty, awesome One. Therefore my persecutors will stumble, and will not prevail. They will be greatly ashamed, for they will not prosper. Their everlasting confusion will never be forgotten.

Jeremiah 20:11 (ESV)

But the Lord is with me as a dread warrior; therefore my persecutors will stumble; they will not overcome me. They will be greatly shamed, for they will not succeed. Their eternal dishonor will never be forgotten.

God delights in delivering us his children.

He is our strong and mighty tower. He is our fortress and our refuge. The battle is His, not ours! WE ARE ON THE WINNING SIDE!

Will you be part of God's army?

Will you surrender to His direction for your life?