

Mighty Man of Valor? — Judges 6:7-40

I. INTRODUCTION

A. A Word Of Encouragement

1. Today, a word of real encouragement
2. We need that — because we are overwhelmed by bad news
3. (Prov 27:9) Ointment and perfume delight the heart, And the sweetness of a man's friend gives delight by hearty counsel.
4. I want to delight your heart with good counsel from the Word of God today

B. But First . . .

1. Some here who have been coming for some time
2. Sitting, listening, learning
3. If asked, they'd say they were members of Calvray Chapel
4. But you know what? You've never really taken the step of declaring your faith in Jesus Christ
5. We usually wait till the end to give people an opportunity to respond — but today, want to do it now
6. Everyone Jesus called to follow Him, He called publicly
 - a. no secret agent Christians
 - b. Jesus said, "If you confess me before men, I will confess you before My Father in heaven, but if you deny Me before men, I will deny you before My Father in heaven."
7. In a moment, going to ask you to stand
 - a. don't worry
 - b. not going to ask Vinnie & Bruno to take you into a side room and have you fill out 10 pages of forms
 - c. were not going to sign you up to teach the toddlers or provide pulpit flowers every Sunday
 - d. simply want you to stand, we will all say a simple prayer with you, and then you can have a seat
8. Let me make something clear . . .
 - a. standing doesn't save you
 - b. we are saved by God's grace, not any thing we do
 - c. but the point of standing is this . . .
 - d. you need to give evidence and testimony to your faith
 - e. true faith expresses itself
 - f. no where is it safer to express faith than among

- God's people
 - g. before you can begin to share your faith with the lost, you need to share it with the saved
 - h. when you stand, people will not be focusing on you; they will be rejoicing in the faithfulness and goodness of God
 - 9. So, if you have been sitting and have come to faith but for whatever reason haven't come forward, now is your time
 - 10. Or, if you now realize, for the first time, you need to commit your life to Christ,
 - 11. Stand to your feet right where you are

II. JUDGES

A. The God Of Nations

1. God not only God of individuals; He is God of nations
2. Not only does God deal with people on a personal and individual basis; He deals with them on a national basis as well
3. It has been said that history is His Story
 - a. that God is Lord and Master of time
 - b. history is the revelation of His unfolding plan of redeeming mankind from sin
4. (Prov 14:34) Righteousness exalts a nation, But sin is a reproach to any people.
5. (Prov 11:11) By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted, But it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked.

B. The Book Of Judges

1. The book of Judges is ample proof that God deals with nations
2. Judges spans the time of almost 400 years between Moses & Joshua and the rise of the kings of Israel
3. It tells the story of how Israel failed to take possession of the land God had given to them
 - a. Joshua and his fellow leaders broke the back of Canaanite power in the Promised Land
 - b. but it was up to each tribe to move in to their portion of the land and drive out the last hold outs of the Canaanites
 - c. this they did not do
 - d. they grew fearful that they would be overcome in battle
 - e. so they were content to just settle down among the Canaanites
4. It wasn't long until the Canaanites re-asserted themselves

- and took possession of the major cities and the richest parts of the land
5. They forced the Jews out of the prosperous valleys and into the rocky central highlands
 6. They took control of the roads and trade routes
 7. It wasn't long until the tribes of Israel were cut off from each other and desperately poor
 8. In their desire to enjoy the prosperity of the neighboring Canaanites, they began to adopt their ways
 - a. began to worship the idols of Canaan; Baal and Asherah
 - b. they began to practice the horribly evil rituals of the Canaanites
 - c. they turned from Yahweh and fell into gross sin
 9. The result, God delivered them over to the hands of oppressors who dominated them with a heavy hand
 10. There is a series of events that is repeated 7 times in Judges
 - a. the people turn from God
 - b. God delivers them over to a foreign power who oppresses them
 - c. the people cry out to God for help
 - d. God answers by sending a deliverer whom we refer to as a judge
 - e. the deliverer defeats the power of the oppressor
 - f. the people experience freedom and blessing as long as the deliverer lives
 - g. when the deliverer dies, the people turn from God and the cycle starts over again
 11. As we come to ch. 6, the Jews have turned from God once again.
 12. The people of Midian, who lived to the east of the Jordan River, had gained great power
 - a. each year at harvest time, they would rise from their place, stream across the Jordan, and attack Canaan
 - b. the Jews could do little more than run for the rocks and caves of the mountains and wait till the storm passed
 - c. when they returned to their homes, their crops and livestock would be gone - stolen by the Midianite raiding parties

III. GIDEON

A. Vs. 7-10

{7} And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried out to the LORD because of the Midianites,
 {8} that the LORD sent a prophet to the children of Israel, who said to them, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'I brought you up from Egypt and brought you out of the house of bondage;
 {9} 'and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of all who oppressed you, and drove them out before you and gave you their land.
 {10} 'Also I said to you, "I am the LORD your God; do not fear the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell." But you have not obeyed My voice."

1. The Amorites were nothing in power compared to the Egyptians — and God was able to deliver Israel from bondage *in* Egypt
2. How much easier would it be for Him to give the Jews victory over the puny Amorites?
3. But Israel didn't see it that way
4. All they knew was that Moses and Joshua were gone and there were still battles to be fought
5. They had made the fatal mistake of thinking that it was Moses and Joshua who had secured their victories before
6. Because they had no visible leader now, their hearts feared and their faith failed
7. There are many Christians today who make the mistake of letting their spiritual growth and experience with God be determined by this or that person
 - a. might be a church leader
 - b. a Christian celebrity, radio personality
 - c. husband, wife, boyfriend, girlfriend
 - d. when they are removed or fall, their faith is devastated
 - e. ex.: of tele-evangelists and their followers
8. Israel's strength was not Moses or Joshua — it was God
9. Let's make sure we do not make Israel's mistake
10. When God calls us to do a thing, He always gives what is necessary to accomplish it

B. Vs. 11-13

{11} Now the Angel of the LORD came and sat under the terebinth tree which was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon threshed wheat in the winepress, in order to hide it from the Midianites.

1. Gideon was of the tribe of Manasseh
2. Manasseh had been given part of the rich valley known as the Jezreel
3. It was harvest time - time for the Midianites to come raiding
4. So Gideon, trying to hide from the Midianites, threshed his wheat in a winepress
 - a. threshing usually done on a hilltop for wind
 - b. winepresses usually dug into the rock where a few trees provided shelter at the base of a hill
 - c. wouldn't be much of a breeze there
 - d. so Gideon would have worked very hard for only a meager return
 - e. but he couldn't risk being seen on the hilltop

{12} And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him, and said to him, "The LORD is with you, you mighty man of valor!"

5. Can you picture this?
6. Here's Gideon, hiding from the Midianites
7. And suddenly, this stranger appears and greets him
8. It appears at this point that Gideon has no clue whose talking to him — it isn't till later that he realizes this is an angel
9. All he knows is he's trying to hide and suddenly there's a stranger there
10. Must have given him a good scare
11. I love to surprise people like this — and now you know why — it's biblical!
12. But what's funny is the angel's greeting
13. "The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor."
14. Mighty man of valor? At this point, Gideon seems anything but that.
 - a. like greeting Sylvester Stallone, "Good afternoon, you golden tongued orator."
 - b. or greeting Madonna, "Hello, you paragon of modesty."
 - c. these things just don't fit
15. This is the verse I want to concentrate on today — but let's go on with the rest of the passage and come back to it in a moment

{13} Gideon said to Him, "O my lord, if the LORD is with us, why then has

all this happened to us? And where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about, saying, 'Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?' But now the LORD has forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites."

16. The angel opened his greeting by saying, "The LORD is with you."
17. Gideon, not realizing it's an angel fires back, "Oh yeah? Then why do I have to hide to thresh my grain?"
 - a. "After all, God has the power to deliver us."
 - b. "He delivered us from Egypt - at least that's what we've been told by our grandparents."
 - c. "But now, it seems He's left us and turned us over to the Midianites."
18. Gideon asked a question nearly every man or woman who has ever walked with God has asked . . .
 - a. where is God when it hurts?
 - b. doesn't He care?
 - c. I've heard He does, and I even believe He does
 - d. so WHY am I getting bashed, bruised, and beat up?

C. Vs. 14-24

{14} Then the LORD turned to him and said, "Go in this might of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent you?"

1. God doesn't answer Gideon's question directly
2. But the answer He does give is much better
3. Gideon asked "Why" Israel was being oppressed
4. God's answer was to send Gideon to deliver Israel
5. By the way, v. 14 reveals to us who the angel was:
 - a. Jehovah, Yahweh
 - b. because Gideon saw Him and was consumed = Jesus!
 - c. Jehovah IS Jesus

{15} So he said to Him, "O my Lord, how can I save Israel? Indeed my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house."

6. Gideon tries to beg off the assignment
7. Gideon' clan was not of the leaders
8. Even in his own family, he was the youngest
9. But none of this mattered to the Lord

10. In fact, these things commended themselves to God
11. Israel's problem was that they were too personality driven
12. God didn't need flashy leaders to deliver His people
13. He just needed a humble instrument
14. So Gideon's excuses only confirmed his choice
15. You know, God loves using those whom the world considers unqualified and uneducated
16. (1 Cor 1:27-29) 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.
17. Don't think you have to wait till your something till God can use you
 - a. in fact, when you think you're something, it's certain God won't use you for anything other than an example of how to be humbled
 - b. where God guides, God provides - as we see in the very next verse

{16} And the LORD said to him, "Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat the Midianites as one man."

18. Gideon would prevail, not because he was anything special, but because God would be with Him
19. Do you realize you have that very same promise
 - a. Jesus said that He would be with us till the end of the age
 - b. God has promised to never leave us nor to forsake us

{17} Then he said to Him, "If now I have found favor in Your sight, then show me a sign that it is You who talk with me.

{18} "Do not depart from here, I pray, until I come to You and bring out my offering and set it before You." And He said, "I will wait until you come back."

{19} So Gideon went in and prepared a young goat, and unleavened bread from an ephah of flour. The meat he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot; and he brought them out to Him under the terebinth tree and presented them.

{20} The Angel of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened bread and lay them on this rock, and pour out the broth." And he did so.

- {21} Then the Angel of the LORD put out the end of the staff that was in His hand, and touched the meat and the unleavened bread; and fire rose out of the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread. And the Angel of the LORD departed out of his sight.
- {22} Now Gideon perceived that He was the Angel of the LORD. So Gideon said, "Alas, O Lord GOD! For I have seen the Angel of the LORD face to face."
- {23} Then the LORD said to him, "Peace be with you; do not fear, you shall not die."
- {24} So Gideon built an altar there to the LORD, and called it The-LORD-Is-Peace. To this day it is still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

20. As we read on, we learn how God brought deliverance to Israel through Gideon

21. But what I want to look at this morning is the remarkable opening statement of the angel to Gideon

IV. MIGHTY MAN OF VALOR?

A. V. 12

1. "And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him, and said to him, 'The LORD is with you, you mighty man of valor!'"

2. As I mentioned, these words seem out of context or character with what we see of Gideon here

a. he was in hiding from the Midianites

b. then when God called him to be the deliverer of Israel, he tried to beg off, excuse himself as being too puny

3. How could God so badly misjudge Gideon?

4. Or maybe God is flattering Gideon

a. (Prov 29:5) A man who flatters his neighbor spreads a net for his feet.

b. in other words, flattery just butters someone up

c. most of us have stooped to this form of flattery at some point

d. ex.

e. is that what God is doing here?

f. buttering Gideon up so he'll consent to becoming Israel's deliverer?

5. Not at all

6. What we see here is God's knowledge of the real Gideon

a. God knew Gideon better than Gideon knew himself

b. just as God knows us better than we know ourselves

- c. God knew what Gideon would accomplish
 - d. He saw the potential there
 - e. and He called it for what it was, even before it came to pass
7. A mighty man of valor lay nestled in the bundle of potentiality that was Gideon
 8. All it needed to be made manifest was the word and work of God
 9. Gideon struggled at first, but he soon came to realize that if God was with him, who could be against him
 10. And it was as he was armed with this knowledge that he went forth to bring deliverance to Israel
 11. And you know the story
 - a. began with an army of 22,000 = too many
 - b. cut in half = still too many
 - c. another weeding process = 300
 - d. God delivered with only 300!
 12. The point and lesson for Israel was this: It is not how many or mighty that wins the battle - it is the favor and presence of God

B. For Us

1. This lesson is for us too
2. It doesn't matter how great the obstacles are before you
3. One with God is always the majority
4. You may not feel like a mighty man or woman of valor
5. But that is in fact what God calls us
6. (Rom 8:35-39) Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." Yet in all these things **we are more than conquerors** through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
7. Listen to some of the things God says we are . . .
 - a. saints
 - b. beloved of God
 - c. the called of Jesus Christ
 - d. blessed with every spiritual blessing
 - e. chosen in Christ
 - f. the adopted of God

- g. God's precious possession
 - h. a holy people
 - i. priests
 - j. prophets
 - k. victorious soldiers
 - l. heirs of God
 - j. God's treasure
 - k. I could go on and on . . .
8. You see friend, we don't need the petty and empty positive self-talk of modern therapy
 9. We have the sure word of God which proclaims us to be much more than any self-talk could ever imagine

C. A New Name

1. Before Gideon went in to battle against the Midianites, God took him through a little training session
2. Israel had fallen into the oppression of Midian because she had turned her back on God and begun serving idols
3. So God told Gideon to begin his career as deliverer by destroying the idols of his own village
4. So Gideon arose and smashed the idols of Baal and Asherah
5. In response, he was given a new name -
 - a. Jerubbaal
 - b. meaning, "If Baal's a god, let him defend himself"
6. Even so, before God calls us to mighty deeds of valor and large steps of faith, He takes into the school of experience with Him in simpler things
 - a. He knows us better than we know ourselves
 - b. He knows what potential lies in our hearts
 - c. He knows what He has ordained us for and called us into being
 - d. never forget that = You are not an accident, mistake
 - e. you exist because God ordained it
 - f. you are here because He has something important for you to do and be
 - g. and He will guide you each step of the way
 - h. your task is to stay yielded and sensitive to His leading
7. And do not despise the day of small beginnings
 - a. we are often so anxious for the big things
 - b. we never take the time to prepare in the small
 - c. then, when the big comes, we find we are in over

- our heads
- d. follow the Lord one step at a time and wait for His perfect timing
- 8. Then, just as Gideon, we will get a new name
- 9. (Rev 2:17) "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it."
 - a. in the bible, the giving of a new name signified that God was doing something new with that person
 - the name was more than a label
 - it was a summary of the person's character, life, and mission
 - b. part of our reward is that one day, as we enter the portals of heaven, God will hand us a white stone, which is like a pass to heaven,
 - c. and engraved on that stone will be a new name
 - d. it will be the name that God has selected for us from all eternity
 - e. not the one our parents hung on us - but one God gave us
 - f. and you know what? I'll bet every name is utterly unique
 - g. won't have to worry about God calling, "John" and having 124,578 people say "What?"
 - h. we'll look at that name and it will reveal to us just how God see us, as unique in all of His creation
 - i. it will be a name of endearment and intimacy

V. CONCLUSION

- A. Don't Know That Name
 - 1. I don't know what my name will be yet
 - 2. I will have to wait
 - 3. But one thing is sure, I want to faithfully follow the Lord today
 - 4. So that I become what my name is
- B. Be Faithful
 - 1. As you look around, you may not think you have much to offer for God to use
 - 2. God does not need your ability - only your availability
 - 3. Remember Gideon - God delights in using what the world esteems as unqualified, so that He gets the glory