

Gideon-Man of Faith & Valour Part 2 Hebrews 11v1, vs 32-34/Judges 6 vs 33-7 vs 25

<p>Introduction and Recap</p> <p>Faith comes from the revelation of God</p> <p>God builds our faith through testing</p> <p>God equips us for what we need</p> <p>God encourages on the way both when we ask Him and when we don't</p> <p>God knows us and what we need and He has provided a body for us to be in</p> <p>God works with us in His great work</p>	<p>Stepping out in faith, what faith is-Hebrews 11 v 1- the evidence of things not seen but they have to be revealed to us as something to hope for. People who have done specific things for God usually are called by Him to do the task. Although there are lot of times when we are brought into circumstances that appear impossible but we still have to find God in them and a word from Him to get through. For Gideon, he came to see his faith in God realised as the evidence of his faith was revealed.</p> <p>We need a revelation of God ourselves, not other people's and that is the start, everything comes from God. Faith comes from God for us, we cannot conjure or work it up, that is working for your salvation, he calls, we follow, seek encouragement and He then equips and our faith grows, we have to do our part. It is not all about us, it is about Him and what He can do in and through us. Every step of the way in Gideon's journey, God gave the encouragement and the equipping. We saw last week how Gideon began to realise this was God talking to Him-Judges 6 v 22</p> <p>Faith comes from hearing-Romans 10 v17 and then we step out in faith, knowing we have heard, blind faith misses this point and jumps in anyway. We need to know God's will when we step out in faith because when we are tested we need some solid ground to go back on</p>
<p>Bible Texts</p>	<p>Application</p>
<p>1 Bigness of the task & the Equipping Judges 6 vs 33-35-</p> <p>The enemy has entered the promised land in huge numbers and they are in the valley of Jezreel. The Spirit comes on Gideon to call an army together. This is the first time God's Spirit comes on Gideon, another confirmation of His call. The people respond-another turn around.</p>	<p>GOD EQUIPS US FOR WHAT TASK HE HAS GIVEN US- 2 Peter 1 v 3; Luke 11 v 13.</p> <p>We all need the anointing of the Holy Spirit on us to do God's work, as without it we can't do it and are no use to Him. When the Spirit is upon people, there is a recognition and there is an effect; the ordinary becomes the extraordinary. The disciples of Jesus clearly received a measure of his Spirit after his resurrection (John 20 v 22)) but at the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came upon them in power. This is the difference that the fullness of the Holy Spirit brings, there is a change in life and circumstances, it is recognised and there was always an effect (Acts 2).</p> <p>God in the Impossible-Humanly speaking this was an impossible situation, we might be or have faced impossible situations when all around you there is pressure and nowhere to go-this is the time when God is doing a work in you. FIND A WORD FROM GOD FOR YOUR SITUATION as Gideon did-we don't do this alone. Overwhelmed by great odds at times? As in Gideon's day when we feel the enemy and circumstances are crowding around us we can call on the Holy Spirit to help us. Often he will come in situations at the right time to say the right thing or do something that dramatically changes things.</p> <p>Romans 5 v 17-Paul says we will reign in life because of the work of Christ-what is reigning in life?</p>

<p>2) Gideon Seeks more reassurance-The fleeces-</p> <p>Judges 6 vs 36-40-Gideon wants more confirmation. This was not a lack of faith; He wanted to know what he was doing was God's will and every step of the way He checked it out with Him. God honoured him and knew his heart.</p>	<p>IT'S OK TO CHECK IT OUT-OK as long as we don't rely on fleeces as there are also about other forms of seeking God, does not mean we have a weak faith.</p> <p>Needing this reassurance is not sinful, it is how faith grows. God is patient with our growing faith and 'gets' our weaknesses. Doubts develop our faith and these doubts do not mean God will not do what He has said as it is not dependent on us. David in the midst of being pursued it says, "Strengthened himself in His God (1 Sam 30 v6)</p>
<p>3) The second test</p> <p>Judges 6 vs 1-8- The enemy are gathering but God tells Gideon to separate his army into a smaller one so that the people will not boast in themselves that they have brought the victory (v2). God only chooses three hundred men to defeat the mighty army. (v7) This time Gideon's faith is such that he does not question God as he did earlier – he now knows God's voice. All the supports and the human possibilities were taken away from him and he had no option to rely totally on God. This was a pivotal moment in the growth of Gideon's faith.</p>	<p>GOD BUILDS OUR FAITH THROUGH TESTING Gideon's first big test was to tear down the altar of Baal (Judges 6 vs 25-27)-God both tests and disciplines us not for His sadistic pleasure but to make us into the people He knows we really are. His tests are to build our faith so we can move onto bigger things in God but He does it in stages.</p> <p>Testing Hurts-Testing-the inoculation of pain in the Western world, we don't like to be uncomfortable so we want it the easy way, avoiding the journey, instant society-this is not the way God usually works!</p> <p>1 Peter 4 v 12-tell us not to be surprised by trials that come our way for testing-the normal Christian life. Jesus said in this world we would have tribulation- but to be of good cheer, Jesus has overcome the world (John 16 v 33).</p> <p>God is not always rational: God's logic and He has the big screen-His ways are not our ways-(Isaiah 55 vs 8-9)God sometimes appears to be silent in our testing, He wants us to still believe we trust Him to work it out and go back to His promises; He is really saying, 'Do you still trust me?'. Gideon had no idea what was coming or how it was going to happen but he surrendered to what God told Him to do without questioning and was at this point past his own agenda.</p> <p>God strips us of everything: Sometimes God removes everything we have to rely on so we can only rely on HIM</p>

4) The encouragement

Judges 7 vs 8-18

Gideon has a lookout point and can see the vast army in the valley below. God encourages Gideon to spy out the enemy camp. In his grace he says that if he is afraid he can take someone with him. God knows Gideon is fearful but does not say so. The two men overhear a dream from one of the Midianite soldiers and this causes Gideon to worship God and return with the confident news of coming victory. Gideon instructs his men for the morning. Gideon takes charge and organises his men, showing an outworking of his faith in God. **Vs 10 & 13-** God knows Gideon's fear, He allows him knowledge to something he would not ordinarily know.

GOD ENCOURAGES US AND KNOWS WHAT WE NEED

Human support-God knew Gideon's heart and he brings him human support when he is fearful. God understands our fearful hearts and he will always send an answer to comfort us; often we don't see it. We need each other there is no weakness in getting others to help us in times of faith testing; that is why God has put us in a body. God doesn't leave us alone.

Word of Prophecy (predictive)-The dream that Gideon heard was a prophetic word about the future, deliberately arranged so Gideon would hear it and be encouraged - it was a signpost of faith along the way. When God calls us he will confirm his word to us even when we don't ask him.

Notice in this part of the story encouragement comes first and then his faith rises to do the task.

God always knows what he is doing and when we look back we realise the wisdom of God.

<p>5 Victory Judges 7 vs 19-25, The battle- no more quivering, after that encounter, Gideon just knew what to do and he secured victory. V 19 – 25 – A tactical battle ensues which causes confusion for the enemy. As the Midianites disperse Gideon calls for others to destroy the armies where they are. The leaders are killed and brought to Gideon. The pitchers (earthenware jars; only an officer would carry a torch so the Midianites would think themselves surrounded by thousands of men. The trumpets and the call for God and for Gideon are perhaps unusual in battle terms but God knew what he was doing .</p>	<p>GOD WORKS WITH US IN HIS GREAT WORK That is how He planned it all a long, we just have to know our part and where to lock into what He is doing and also to stand back. Sometimes we make huge blunders because we interfere and don't stand back and let God do His work in people and situations.</p> <p>When we know, we know and this level of faith is where God wants us to be, to know His leading and voice (John 10) and make His decisions. Do we know our place in God's work? What is it that God is calling you to be a part of? What are you doing about it?</p> <p>God working with us, we do our part..... Jeff Lucas says, <i>'God wants to use us now. We might struggle and protest that we're too messed up, or lacking in love; but His calling comes with complete and total knowledge of us. He doesn't consider including us as His partners for the Kingdom by ignoring our frailties, but with full knowledge of them. He counts you in. Don't you dare count yourself out.'</i> (From 'Lucas on Life Every day,' Jul/Aug 2011 edition).</p>
<p>6 Encouragement along the way, God at every step reassures Gideon, 3 times particularly. 6v16; 6 v23; 7v9></p>	<p>GOD ENCOURAGES US- As we step out in faith He will equip us as we go on. We have to realise that faith is not dependent on us, it is about HIM, He gives us the faith, He equips us, we just have to be available.</p>