

Feb 4th 2007: Commissioning Sunday: Judges chapter 7

This morning our focus ...commitment to the ministry that the Lordas His church
 As a group..... as individuals
A commitment that is to serving the Lord.....in His way.....in His power....to His glory

If such a commitment is real....then we will be opening ourselves up....
 grand adventure Of Faith

For God's way.....is as different to our way....as God Himself is diff to us

- **This** is seen in a very obvious way.....in the story that we read...from Judges 7
 About Gideon and his 300 warriors.

It contains an unsurpassable lesson.....about God's way of working

For it shows us that the way of victory
 Is not through great numbers.....Human strategy.....or resources
 But through a complete and utter dependence on the power and enabling of God

- **The story is set in**....period of the judges.....A time of great turmoil and struggle for
There is as yet no king.....but a tribal system supposedly united under God.....
 disrupted by evil & rebellion.....

In Judges 6 we read.....that this evil &....had so taken hold...that the Lord had given
hands of the Midianites.....and 6:2—6.....

- **This cry for help**.....was always responded to by...who then raised up a deliverer
And in this case.....the deliverer was not a great warrior or a mature leader
But a young man called Gideon.....who wrestled with spiritual doubts
and responded to the angels commissioning...by saying.....**6:15**.....

When God set the task before him....Gideon looked at himself and found no reason 4
 confidence

The task was immense.....It was to save Israel out of Midian's hands
An enemy that that was so huge....that it was imposs to count the men and camels.....

- **But God made a promise** to Gideon That He still continues to make to every person that He calls into His service.....**Judges 6:16**.....

Now a lot happens between this promise.....major battle.....great victory
(Leave you to read that)

But after such a statement

You would have to think that God would make things easy for Gideon
That he would have plenty of support in terms of manpower
An abundance of resources
Heaps of encouragement

Not so

- **The first thing that Happens is that**
THE ENEMY INCREASES

Judges 6:33 says: *Now all the Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples joined forces and crossed over the Jordan and camped in the Valley of Jezreel*

Indeed Judges 8:10 tells us that they totaled 135,000.....125,000 at least swordsmen
7:12 tells us...then when you looked at their camp.....thick on the ground....locusts

- **Gideon had just won a victory....in his own family**
He turns from that to the task...Lord has called Him into
And discovers that the Midianites had been joined by other fierce nomadic tribes

All were sworn enemies of Israel.....All were well prepared for battle
Seasoned warriors ...with mobility and experience

Praise the Lord however....He is with Gideon even as He promised
And we read in v 34 that the Spirit of the Lord Himself....came upon Gideon
He was given power...wisdom...enthusiasm...zeal for the task

He blows the trumpet....summons the troops.....and 32,000 join Him
Isn't God good !!

- **Many of usexp the same thing in ministry**
Lord lays on our heart a task.....And though we feel inadequate we respond by faith

Then suddenly we realise that its going to be more demanding.....harder....bigger
But the Lord seems to pour on us... a special portion of His Spirit
 Our enthusiasm grows....courage..faith.....**And others** join us

- **We may have times of doubt...as Gideon obviously did....He even sought a sign**
 But the Lord confirms His purpose.....**Re stokes the fire as it were...**in our hearts

Then the second thing that happened.....for Gideon
 Was**THE LORD LESSENED GIDEON'S RESOURCES**

He had 32,000 men and the enemy had 135,000
 And the Lord told him.....You have too many men

*(I detest that lotto advert....Big is better=====But that is the way the world thinks
 And unfortunately.....its often the way the church thinks
 We are moving into the age of the mega church....where unless you have ..)*

Theres a verse in Zechariah 4:10 that asks.....
"Who despises the day of small things?"

And it goes on to show that it's the small things,,,,,,the small people.....God uses most
In the very same chapter.....God proclaims
Not by might, Nor by Power, But by My Spirit says the Lord

- **And if ever a Bible story proved that point.....This story does**

God said....tell the ones who are fearful.....Who don't really want to be here
 That they are free to go home

What a courageous thing for Gideon to have to do
 These people were not professional soldiers
 Up to then.....their plan when the Medianites came.....Find a cave and.....

They could see the enemy stretched out in the valley.....**135,000** well armed
 And here they were being told....they could go:::No shame...no recompense
They left in their droves.....22,000

Still too many said God.....And there by the water.....God separated them again
300 were chosen

From the ten thousand that wanted to be there....**God** said these are the 300 I want....

- Was there anything wrong with the rest.....NO
- Were they any less willing or able.....I DOUBT IT.

God made it as so impossible.....That they had to trust in Him alone
And would know for ever....That their God gave them the victory

**This would have been a very hard time for Gideon.....and hard times are part of any
But the really wonderful thing....is what happened next**

• GOD ENCOURAGED GIDEON

Gideon is well known....for seeking signs from God
Before He committed himself to.....He put out his fleece.....twice(chapter 6)

But in this moment of greatest testing.....When God leaves him with just 300 farmers ..to fight an enemy of 135,000

Gideon seeks no sign.....He just is prepared to trust

But God in His mercy sends Gideon with his servant.....into the enemy camp...dark of night.....**He comes up** against a tent....IT JUST happens that 2 men are talking...dream
This can be nothing other than the sword of Gideon

I'm sure Gideon didn't reckon....that they even knew his name

Yet here.....they are proclaiming their fear of Him....and of His God.....

No wonder he worshipped **Went back** filled with the power of God

- This is something God delights to do for His servants

As you minister for Him.....Look for the encouragement He will send your way

Then finally
THE MOST AMAZING VICTORY

Gideon divided his 300 into 3 groups.....

In one hand they held a lighted torch within a clay jar.....In the other a trumpet
 (Now normally only a few men had trumpets.....)

Then in the middle watch.....enemy were sleeping.....darkest time

They surrounded.....And when Gideon blew His trumpet.....

And they shouted....For the Lord and for Gideon....A sword for...

And stood there with a torch in one hand....A trumpet.....And no way of holding
And before them they saw panic.....

- **God is still in the business of victory.....not defeat**

And he often uses the weak....the small....the insignificant

His desire is to have us trusting in Him and not our own strength

- **Whatever your ministry is for Him.....**And we all have

Don't expect it to be without its difficulties.....problems....challenges

Persevere in it by faith.....Look beyond what is lacking.....**Or what** is taken away

To what God is about to do....To provide....To achieve

FOR THE BATTLE DOES INDEED BELONG TO THE LORD

