



Judges 6:11-17

God's promise: "I will be with you"

The Lord had sent an unnamed prophet to remind Israel of how He had saved His children in the past and to command them not to worship idols in the land where they lived.

*<sup>10</sup> I said to you, 'I am the Lord your God; do not worship the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you live.' But you have not listened to me."*

We learned last week what happened when Israel didn't listen to Yahweh; they lost their peace, protection and provision, as God allowed their enemies to steal, kill and destroy. Israel's enemies swarmed into the land like locusts and rode on camels as numerous as the sand of the seashore (c. 135,000). Even though God withheld His blessing, He never gave up on them. This was the pattern of Israel's worship throughout Judges.

They didn't listen to the prophet so the Lord sent an angel to Gideon to instruct him of God's plan to save Israel again; it gets personal this time.

There follows an amazing dialogue between the angel of the Lord and Gideon.

#### The scene

*Vs. 11 The angel of the Lord came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites.*

Gideon is working hard, providing food under the most difficult of circumstances. He is out-of-sight of his enemies but not out-of-sight nor mind of the Lord (**Psalm 139**).



Ancient winepress

#### The angel of the Lord speaks:-

*Vs. 12 When the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, he said, "The Lord is with you, mighty warrior."*

Look at that promise and encouragement that God spoke. He saw what Gideon would become, not what he was at that moment.

How does Gideon respond?

He **questions** and **blames** God! Gideon misunderstands the Lord's intention to save Israel and claims He has abandoned them; moreover He is punishing them! Gideon fails to mention that they had first abandoned Him to worship idols!

#### Gideon replies:-

*Vs. 13 "Pardon me, my lord," Gideon replied, "but if the Lord is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our ancestors told us about when they said, 'Did not the Lord bring us up out of Egypt?' But now the Lord has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midian."*

#### The angel of the Lord speaks again:-

*Vs. 14 The Lord turned to him and said, "Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand. Am I not sending you?"*

The angel of the Lord now commands Gideon to do something about it, to go in the strength he has to save Israel. What an impossible challenge it was but can the joy of the Lord be his strength – does he know Him personally as His Lord, God, King and Saviour?

How does Gideon now reply?

He politely makes **excuses** and **blames** his family background for being unable to obey.

**Gideon questions:-**

**Vs. 15** *"Pardon me, my lord," Gideon replied, "but how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family."*

**The angel of the Lord answers:-**

**Vs. 16** *The Lord answered, "I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites, leaving none alive."*

Again the angel of the Lord assures Gideon that he is not alone in the battle and success is guaranteed when the Lord is with him.

How does Gideon now respond to God's word?

With **doubt!** Gideon *has* found favour (grace) in God's eyes but he still needs a sign (confirmation & reassurance) that he really is talking to a messenger who brings a word from God.

**Gideon replies:-**

**Vs. 17** *Gideon replied, "If now I have found favour in your eyes, give me a sign that it is really you talking to me."*

If you were having this conversation, how would you respond?

Would you demonstrate the same weaknesses as Gideon?

Would you like Gideon:-

- Question the word of God?
- Blame God for your own wrongdoing?
- Make excuses why you are disobedient to His commands?
- Blame your family background or your personal weakness?
- Doubt that God is who He says He is, that He is sovereign and has all power and authority over creation?

**Challenge to us this week:**

If you are facing what seems impossible, remember God is with you, so "go in the strength you have" – go with the joy of the Lord working in and through you for His glory. Believe in faith that he 'can, where you and I can't'!

Perhaps knowledge of the Old Testament scriptures would comfort you, as God never changes His mind...?

**Isaiah 40:31** *but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.*

**Habakkuk 3:19** *The Sovereign Lord is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to tread on the heights.*

He is able to win an impossible battle for you but you must first surrender not to your enemies...but surrender your will to His and believe, trust in the Lord with all your heart and have faith!

**Ephesians 3:20** *Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us,*

Take a step of faith in obedience and see what the Lord can do through your weakness, as you remain faithful, make yourself available and go on being teachable.

Amen