

Gideon Part 2

by Ian Paisley

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being filled with the Spirit of God and having a clear vision of God's plan and purpose in order to be effective in our ministries and to achieve victory in our spiritual battles.

Duration: 34:14

Scripture: Judges 7:19

Topics: "Spiritual Perseverance", "Holy Spirit"

Description

This sermon delves into the story of Gideon from the book of Judges, focusing on the themes of perseverance, reliance on the Spirit of God, and the need for believers to be filled with the fire and light of God. It emphasizes the importance of sticking to God's calling even in the face of opposition and the danger of compromising in moments of triumph.

Transcript

The book of Judges chapter 8 and verse 4, the last words of the text, fifth yet pursuing, fifth yet pursuing. Last Lord's Day morning we had our first message on Gideon. I want to bring my second message on this great biblical character this morning.

And I want to link that text, fifth yet pursuing, with a verse over in chapter 7 which we read. Verse 19, And they blew the trumpets, and break the pitchers that were in their hands, and they cried the sword of the Lord and of Gideon. I want to discuss with you five things.

One, the voice of the trumpet. Secondly, the vessel of the tactic. Thirdly, the vision of the torch.

Fourthly, the valor of the tested. And fifthly, the victory of the triumphant. Dealing first of all with the voice of the trumpet.

Let me just briefly sketch in for you the historical setting. The Midianites had put their iron heel of tyranny upon the children of Israel. God visited Gideon and prepared him and commissioned him to be the deliverer.

And then something happened to Gideon. Turn back to verse 34 of chapter 6. But the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon and he blew a trumpet. And Ebezer was gathered after him.

And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh who also was gathered after him. And he sent messengers unto Asher and unto Zebulun and unto Naphtali. And they came up to meet him.

You will notice that the voice of the trumpet was inspired by the power of the infilling of the Spirit of God. The Bible is full of trumpets and full of the voice of trumpets. And could I remind you that the whole dispensation of God's grace is going to end with the voice of the great trumpet? And the trumpet shall sound and the dead in Christ shall rise first.

And we shall all be chained in a moment in the twinkling of an eye on the last trumpet. And could I remind you that there will be no trumpets after the last trumpet? That is the last trumpet that sounds. The Bible is filled with trumpets.

And the voice of the trumpet is only effective when it's inspired by the Spirit of God. If you study the book of Leviticus you will find that there are two silver trumpets mentioned there. They are symbolical.

They are typical. They prefigure the gospel. Why are they two? Because two is a number of witness.

By two or three shall every word be established. And the gospel trumpet needs to be sounded today. But you say to me, but the gospel trumpet is being sounded.

Across the world there are faithful men of God who are sounding the gospel trumpet. There's no doubt about that. But the gospel trumpet is ineffectual because it is not being blown by the lips of men who are filled with the Holy Ghost.

The great essential today is that we might know the enablement and the enjoyment of the power of the Spirit of God. Now having gathered an enormous crowd of people to Him, the Lord said, There are too many. And the Lord had to do a separating work, a segregation.

He had to go in among them and separate them. And of the thousands that came to battle, God only got 300 to do the work. I used to have the hazy, crazy notion that if I could get everybody in the church right, then I would have revival.

And I used to spend Lord's Day mornings as a young preacher scolding the congregation. I don't know how they pulled it so long. And I used to scold them for not being at the prayer meeting.

And scold them for not being more spiritual. And scold them for not bringing sinners to hear the gospel. And scold them for not giving enough money to carry on God's work.

And I found it did no good whatsoever. You can never get a believer into blessing by scolding them. You know, sir, when your wife scolds you, and she does, you just tighten up and you're just more stubborn.

And when your husband, dear woman, scolds you, man, you do stand in your dignity, don't you? And you do say, I'll just not do it to please him. And I found out, you know what I found out? I found out that God must separate a people for His name. That God must get a minority.

And God deals and works through minority. He doesn't need this whole congregation to be right. If they could get half a dozen people here on fire for God, there would be such fire from their souls that they would set everybody else on fire.

God did a separating work. And He got 300 men that had steel in their backbones, that refused to budge or bend, that were filled with courage, filled with joy, filled with zeal, filled with enthusiasm, and filled with joy. 300 of them.

And He said, by these 300 men I will defeat the armies of Midian. Now, when Gideon came back from hearing the nightmare that that man had down in the tent of Midian in the camp, what did he do? I want you to look at it. He put a trumpet in every man's hand.

The voice of the trumpet. Every man had the same musical instrument given to him. There is no such thing as a one-man ministry in the church.

The ministry of the church is the ministry of the whole church. Every believer has a part in this ministry. Only one man can speak at a time.

But the whole church should be blowing the trumpet with the preacher as he blows the trumpet in the pulpit. God has given to you a trumpet, believers. Are you blowing it? It is amazing, and it's wonderful, how God leads you to make contact with people.

This past week I had the great joy of making contacts in Caesar's household. That's what I call Strasbourg. I'm glad God has sent in Caesar's household.

We have had a special plane put on from London to Strasbourg. Because it was the first time that plane flew, the mayor of Strasbourg gave us a free lunch. I'm a bellamina man, and I like things for nothing, so I was at the free lunch.

I was sitting with my good wife, and there were two secretaries at the end of the table. We had a great conversation, discovered that one of them had just been recently born again of the Holy Spirit, was washed in the blood of the Lamb. The other young lady was Church of England, and of course she didn't know too much.

There was one thing she said she didn't like, and that was her vicar, for he was no good. So we had common ground when she said that. And I tell you, we had a good time of witness.

And then I witnessed to another prominent member of the parliament, whom I'll not name, and he asked me the next time I come, he said, I'd like you to bring me a Bible. I'd like to read the Word of God. You pray that as that man reads the Bible, God will save him.

It's a good thing, you know, to blow the trumpet. I trust that today there will be born in our hearts, every one of us, a desire to blow the trumpet. Brother, blow the trumpet so loud you'll blow the brims out of the devil and out of the powers of hell.

Come on, let's blow the trumpet. Oh, that every child of God in this church would say, this year I'm going to go out one night anyway a month, or one night a week to blow the trumpet. We could do with recruits in this church.

I'm going to blow the trumpet of prayer. I never went to the prayer meeting before, the service before, but tonight I'm going to go and blow the trumpet in prayer. It might be a great thing if I came home from Cookstown and they were queuing down the stairway to get into the prayer meeting.

If people made up their minds that we're going to blow the trumpet. Brother, what's wrong with you? Has the devil so chloroformed you, you can't get out of the sleep that's fallen upon you? Dear sister in Christ, what's wrong with you? The world's going to hell. Rise up and blow the trumpet in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It wasn't a very hard thing to do, was it? To blow a trumpet. God didn't say to them, go and fight the Midianites. God said, blow the trumpet.

The word of God does the fighting. It's not the power of man. Then let's look secondly at the vessel of the tactic.

You see, God showed them a way to do it. The first thing was that every man's vessel was to be emptied. Now what was in the vessel? Look at verse 8 of chapter 7. There were vittles in the vessel.

Vittles in the vessel. But they had to empty out the natural food for natural nourishment. And to depend not upon the strength of nature, but on the strength and fire of God.

So the first thing that had to happen, the vessel had to be emptied. Emptied that thou mayest fill it. So if I'm going to blow the trumpet, I've got first of all to be emptied.

The vessel must be emptied. Turn over to 2 Timothy chapter 20 and verse 21. 2 Timothy chapter 2. I saw an alarmed expression on my wife's face and I knew I'd made a mistake.

2 Timothy chapter 2 and verse 20. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth, some to honor and some to dishonor. If a man therefore purge himself from these, here is an emptying that I do.

It's not enough to say, Lord, empty me. You have got to do the emptying yourself in certain things. Not enough for me to say, Lord, empty me.

When you're busy filling your heart with both hands, with the things of the world and of the flesh and of the devil, you have to do a purging. And if you purge yourself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified and meet for the master's use and prepared unto every good work. So I have to quit depending upon natural resources.

Many churches are depending on natural resources. On Friday night we had a tremendous meeting in Ballymena, a farewell to the Rev. Alan Kearns, who's leaving us to take up duties in our Greenville church. So many there that there was hundreds had to stand and many scores of people were turned away altogether.

And as I was sitting at that pulpit, my mind went back to 1951 in a little tin mission hall on Killalee Street in Cross Garden on the 17th of March when the Free Presbyterian Church started. And I said, Lord, if you had told me that this is what you were going to do, I couldn't have contained myself for joy. And the Rev. asked me, Cook was beside me, and he said, You know what you said to me, Dr. Beasley, when I started to preach with you as a boy, as an early student of the church? You said, You know, Bert, we're never going to preach to Christ.

We're going to just have a little end-time testimony, just a few faithful people. So never think you'll have a big church. Never think you'll have a crowd.

Just be faithful. And he said, I always remembered that. In the early days when I never had a crowd, just Mr. and Mrs. Wood and Timothy Timber were in preeminence.

And they said it nerved me for the battle. But God has done great things. But God wants to do greater things.

And I want to see in 1980 every seat in this church filled on Sunday morning and Sunday evening. And God can do it. Now I can't do it.

And we're in a war situation. And it's difficult. But praise God, God can do it.

Empty. Then the vessels were filled with a torch. If you look at the margin, they put a brand, a fire brand into every vessel.

I want to be a fire brand for God. An old woman went to John Wesley once and she said, Our preacher's very, very poor, Mr. Wesley. He's no good.

And Wesley said, Madam, pray that the Lord will set him on fire. And when the Lord sets him on fire, people will come out to see him burn. I want to tell you you need to pray the preacher on fire.

And if the preacher catches fire, as Mr. Spurgeon said of you, of a fireman in the pulpit, there will be no snowman left in the pew. They'll soon melt. And I tell you we need to be filled with the torch of fire.

But I want to tell you something. Before the fire lit up the camp of the Midianites, it first of all lit up the vessel of the chosen 300. And except I'm lit up with the light of God, I'll never be able to light the world for Jesus Christ.

Let me digress just for one moment till I tell you something that I'm sure you'll enjoy. On Thursday in the Strasbourg Parliament, the lights on the whole back of the Parliament didn't come on at 10 o'clock when we took our seats. I sat for 10 minutes and then I addressed the president and I said, I know some people don't want me to be in this Parliament.

They'd like me to be outside the door, but as long as I'm here I want light on the subject. Can I have the lights off? So he apologized and he said he would order them off. I waited for another half hour and they didn't come on so I got up and I gave him all sorts.

As only an Ulster man could give him. And it caused quite a commotion. And then a little Dutch man thought he was clever and he got up and he said, surely the reverend Paisley knows the first chapter of John's Gospel where it says the light shineth in darkness.

And I got up and the president said, what do you want to say? I said, I want to speak to this point, sir. I said, I've got a better scripture for you, my friend. If the light that is in you be darkness, how great is that darkness? Man, that brought the whole Parliament down in tears.

And a fellow says, never exchange texts with Ian Paisley. He knows them all. Well, I don't know them all.

I should know them all. But listen, my brethren, except God has lighted us, we'll never light the world. Except our whole being is filled with light.

We owe to be filled with the fire and light of the Spirit of God. That's what we need. Every one of us, preacher and people alike.

This infilling. And then I want you to know there's something else. That the vessel had to be destroyed completely that the light might shine forth.

And except we're prepared for the utter destruction of the flesh, that vessel was an earthen vessel. It speaks of the earth of man, Adam read earth. He was made of the dust of the earth and God must break us and take us to the cross that flesh might be crucified.

That Christ must increase and I must decrease. When I die with Him, praise God, I live unto righteousness. The vessel of the temple.

Then we come to the vision of the torch. And when the vessels were smashed, the brands of fire lit up the whole camp of the Midianites. What happened? The 300 men got a vision.

They couldn't see anything until the fire torches burned. And what did they see? Look at it. Every man stood in his place round the camp.

And verse 21 of Judges 7. And all the host ran. They saw them fleeing. I want to tell you, if you get the light of God upon the rebels, they'll flee.

This is God's light. This is a powerful book, you know. This book brought down the great pagan temples in the first century and the Roman synagogues in the 16th century.

And praise God, it can do the same today. The word of God. May God give us vision.

The vision of the torch. They saw them running and crying in fear. And then to add to it, they blew the trumpet.

Look at verse 22. And the 300 blew the trumpets and the Lord set every man's sword against his fellow. God puts confusion on the enemies of the gospel.

This is the way to fight God's battle. With the vessel broken. The light shining.

The trumpet sounding. And man crying out the sword of the Lord and of Gideon. And I can say, and so can you use it in your own name, the sword of the Lord and of Ian Paisley.

Hallelujah. It's our sword as well. For God has given it into our hands.

I tell you, friends, this is the way to victory. And God wants this church to have the vision of the torch. God will dispel the enemy.

I'm not afraid of what Papa is going to do. God will take care of it. I'm not afraid of the belly Miss Scallion talks.

Hallelujah. And I want to tell you the difference between this church and potpourri is not mixed mary. There's no such thing as that argument when the reformers left the church of Rome.

They didn't leave the church of Rome on the issue of mixed marriages. The thing that divides Protestantism from Romanism is the mass. And these men talking about mixed marriages, that's not the

issue.

The issue is the unbridgeable gulf, unbridgeable gulf between potpourri and Protestantism. And it will never be crossed over and never can be crossed over. I'm not afraid.

We're going to win this battle. Hallelujah. The Lord's on our side.

And better than that, we're on the Lord's side. That's the best thing of all. Then let's look at the valor of the tested.

And we're coming now to my text. I've just got to it. Verse 4 of chapter 8, faint yet pursuingly.

You know the great tragedy in God's work is that people are not baptized with stickability. They don't keep at it. The great temptation is to run away.

Even after there's been a great victory, just to run away. Not to stick to it. May the Lord help us to stick to it.

Here was Timothy. He was stiff, but he hadn't given up on that. He wanted to see the thing through to the end.

God's people will have the valor of the tested. Why did God separate these 300 men? Because he knew that they would go right on to the end of God's road and God's will. No turning back.

No one should join me. Still I will follow. No turning back.

That was the song they sang. And what happened? Oh, there was opposition. The man of Ephraim opposed them.

The man of Succoth opposed them. And the man of Penuel opposed them. Wouldn't help them.

And when you're in the stiffest conflict, they'll be brethren and sisters in Christ, they'll not help you. And they'll not come to the help of the Lord against the mighty. And you'll fight a lonely battle.

But brother, even though you're faint, keep pursuing. For God's going to give you the victory. Many a time I felt like running away.

Many a time I felt like resigning. Many a time I've threatened to do it. But thank God I never did it.

Because I believe that the Lord wants us to stick like a limpet to the rock. Not to take an easy road. Any old coward can run away.

Any old dead fish can go with us. It's a live fish that swims against the current. God wants us, brethren, to battle on.

And this church I trust in 1980 will battle on, faint, yet pursuing. Maybe after the first Sunday of February you'll be faint, but you'll yet be pursuing. By the grace of God, let's do it.

We have got to go on. Brethren, God said let the children of Israel go forth. And then last of all, there's the victory of the triumphant.

And Zeb was slain. And Zeb and Zal, Muna and Zeba were also slain. And Or was slain.

All the men that opposed Gideon were slain. And yet let me show you something. That the day of Gideon's victory was the day of his greatest backsliding.

Because we read, and I was very sad when I studied this last night, or rather in the early hours of this morning, it was after midnight. Verse 21, And Gideon arose and slew Zeba, verse 21 of chapter 8, And Zal, Muna, and took away the ornaments that were on their camels' necks. Now if you have a marginal Bible, it reads ornaments like the moon.

Because they were moon worshippers. The Ishmaelites were moon worshippers. And if you come down to verse 24, And Gideon said unto them, I would desire a request of you, That ye would give me every man the earrings of his prey.

For they had golden earrings, because they were Ishmaelites, Made in the shape of the moon, were moon worshippers. And they answered, We will willingly give them. And they spread a garment, And did cast therein every man the earrings of his prey.

And the weight of the golden earrings that he requested Was a thousand and seven hundred shekels of gold. Beside ornaments and collars and purple raiment That was on the kings of Midian, And beside the chains that were about their camels' necks. And Gideon made a knee-fog thereof, And put it in a city in Orpah.

And all Israel went thither a-whoring after it. Which thing became a snare unto Gideon and to his house. But what a sad ending.

A man of tremendous blessing, And he became a party to idolatrous worship. Did you ever notice that in Genesis chapter 1, God didn't call the sun the sun? He called it the greater light. And he called the moon the lesser light.

For the name sun and the name moon Were names given to the greater and lesser light By idolatrous worshippers. The sun has been the object of worship And adoration to the greatest part of the people of the east. It is thought to be the sun that the Phoenicians worshipped Under the name of Beel.

The Moabites under the name of Shemosh. The Amorites by that of Moloch. And the Israelites by the name Beel And by the king of the host of heaven.

They did not separate sun worship from that of the moon Whom they called Astarte, the queen of heaven. It's interesting to note That the first mention of the sun in the Bible It's mentioned in its going down, in its extinguishing. And when the sun went down, we read in Genesis 15 and 12 God spoke to Abraham.

The last book of the Bible tells me about the sun going down forever When God makes the sun like black cloth of hair And the moon turns to blood. What did he do in the hour of his triumph? He compromised. And this end of Gideon's story Is a very sad end indeed.

It's not the way that we start, brethren, that matters. It's the way we finish. May God help us not only to start well And continue well But may God help us to complete the race well For Jesus' sake And everybody's sake.

Amen.

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