

PM - Salvation is not about what you are right now but what you can become.

This is especially true with disciples - men who want to be used by God. God does not see you as you are but what you can become.

Judges 6:11-14—11 *Now the angel of the Lord came and sat under the terebinth at Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the winepress to hide it from the Midianites. 12 And the angel of the Lord appeared to him and said to him, "The Lord is with you, O mighty man of valor." 13 And Gideon said to him, "Please, my lord, if the Lord is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all his wonderful deeds that our fathers recounted to us, saying, 'Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt?' But now the Lord has forsaken us and given us into the hand of Midian." 14 And the Lord turned to him and said, "Go in this might of yours and save Israel from the hand of Midian; do not I send you?"*

I. MANS VIEW OF CALLING

A. Human nature: We see all the reasons why it won't work - some conclusions we come to

1. Circumstances determine the validity of Gods word:

Judges 6:13 *And Gideon said to him, "Please, my lord, if the Lord is with us, why then has all this happened to us?"*

- a) Gideon is saying - based on what I am seeing and experiencing there is no way anything will change
- b) Passing of time/ decisions of sin/ delay and disobedience/ bad decisions with money/ ministry failure
 - (1) All of these things can discourage men from seeing their potential

2. Incorrect interpretation of the past

Judges 6:13 *where are all his wonderful deeds that our fathers recounted to us*

- a) Truth is sometimes we come to wrong conclusions about the past
- b) Gideon makes it seem like Israel did nothing wrong - reality they were under Midians control because of their sin - what they did / that was on them - but God wanted to change that
- c) not every negative experience is automatically a sign from God or indicator that God has abandoned you or forgotten you

3. We forget who's calling us

- a) Problem with many men - they feel as if the calling of God is just one of many things they could be doing
- b) This was a joyful and exciting thing God was visiting Gideon with - you can do something incredible for God

B. Problem is - Gideon is actually making a statement about God - His character

Judges 6:13 *But now the Lord has forsaken us and given us into the hand of Midian."*

1. Men can take God out of the equation of calling and ministry
 - a) fail to see ourselves making a difference
 - b) view ministry / being used by God through the lens of only what I can do - never enough
2. When we view God and ourselves wrong - we will view ministry incorrectly also
 - a) Gideon misses the incredible fact of who is calling him and His view of Him

II. GODS VIEW

A. Biblical pattern - God meets men where they are, often times this is unexpected

Judges 6:12 *And the angel of the Lord appeared to him and said to him, "The Lord is with you, O mighty man of valor."*

1. God meets men Men who feel unqualified
 - a) Read later - Gideon was the least among his family / felt incredibly unqualified
 - b) Mistake- to do great things for God you have to be great - education, status, money,
2. God meets men Men who feel weak and fearful
 - a) Picture - threshing wheat in a wine press / maximum effort with the absolute least amount of return

Judges 6:3-6—3 *For whenever the Israelites planted crops, the Midianites and the Amalekites and the people of the East would come up against them. 4 They would encamp against them and devour the produce of the land, as far as Gaza, and leave no sustenance in Israel and no sheep or ox or donkey. 5 For*

they would come up with their livestock and their tents; they would come like locusts in number—both they and their camels could not be counted—so that they laid waste the land as they came in. 6 And Israel was brought very low because of Midian. And the people of Israel cried out for help to the Lord.

- b) Larger context - Israel had been under oppression from Midian for 7 years - they would plant and water their crops and right before they would be ready to harvest the enemy would come in and steal all of it.
- 3. God meets men Men who are already busy
 - a) Disciples - Fishing business / Moses - tending the flock of Jethro / Paul - busy persecuting Christians
 - b) This can be difficult for men - Already busy already doing something - and God interrupts our plans
- B. God does not see us the way we see ourselves
 - 1. God sees what men can become
 - a) Statement - Mighty man of valor / this had nothing to do with what Gideon was currently doing
 - (1) Cowardly hiding in a wine press trying to survive - nothing mighty about that
 - (2) When God sees you - he sees you not for what you are today but where he can take you and what you can become
 - 2. God sees the potential of surrender
 - a) Encouraging thing (Especially in our fellowship) God can use anyone
 - b) Incredible to me that God would use us to accomplish His will on the earth / who am I
 - 3. God enables men to do His will
 - a) God was patient with Gideon - looked beyond his fears and doubts and still used him
 - b) God makes up the difference for where we lack - you might feel weak, unable, unqualified

III. SENT MEN

Judges 6:14 *And the Lord turned to him and said, "Go in this might of yours and save Israel from the hand of Midian; do not I send you?"*

- A. God sends men at many different levels
 - 1. Sent to Serve

- a) Gideon went from serving himself to Serving the will of God
 - b) Salvation is not all about you- its about other people

Acts 6:3 *And so, brothers, select seven men who are well respected and are full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will give them this responsibility.*

- c) You have to have eyes to see the need - taking the initiative to do what needs doing
- 2. Sent to Preach
 - a) There are men here - God wants to use your life to preach the Gospel / impact other cities even nations

Mark 16:15 *And then he told them, "Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone."*

- 3. Sent to Bring Deliverance

Judges 6:14 *"Go in this might of yours and save Israel from the hand of Midian"*

- a) This wasn't a career choice - one of many things a man could do ... what would possibly more important than this.. be more rewarding .. impact more people

- B. God uses men to show His strength

- 1. You can be used by God today
 - a) God is not waiting for you to have all of life figured out before he will help you / no man is the complete package - even after Gideon surrendered he was still weak, fearful and intimidated but he was willing to obey.
 - b) God uses men where they are
 - 2. Make decisions that line up with Gods will for your life
 - a) Bible says seek first the kingdom of God
 - (1) Decisions about money/time/ministry - do the choices I am making today get me closer to the will of God or take me further away?
 - 3. God wants to speak

Judges 6:16 *And the Lord said to him, "But I will be with you, and you shall strike the Midianites as one man."*

- a) This is what is so encouraging - God wants to speak to you / make his will clear
 - b) There is nothing more rewarding or fulfilling than that calling for your life.