

## **1055 - Judges 6:11-18 + 25-40 + 7:9-21 GIDEON – STRENGTH IN WEAKNESS**

PRELIMS. I would like tonight to **encourage** you to serve the Lord without **fear**! Many Xns are afraid of being **public** about their faith. So I want you all to know the type of person that uses to fulfil His purposes – people exactly like you/me! It was **not mock humility** that made Paul say “*I am less than the least of all saints*” [Eph 3:8] Paul actually **felt** he was! “*I was with you in weakness, in fear and in much trembling*” [1C2:3] He also said that it was **when** he was **weak** that he was strong! [2Cor 12:10] It is one of Satan’s ploys to convince Xns that they **cannot** be used in serving God because they are ‘nobodies’! But the Bible tells us otherwise. Five points re Gideon to help us!

\*The **first** point is that God uses **weak/timid/insecure/frightened** people! Gideon **needed four signs** before he had enough courage to go forward! He had so many questions to ask God, so many objections to make! Verses [6:21,38,40, 7:14]! **Jonah** had a very bad spirit and attitude – towards God and the Ninevites! Yet God used him greatly! I reckon **everyone** feels ‘nervous’ about speaking for the Lord. **APP** None of us, should conclude that we can never ‘play a part’ in someone coming to know the Lord! **Timothy** of all people, was **timid** “*God has not given us the spirit of fear but of power*” follows “*I remind you to stir up (fan into flame) the gift of God that is in you*” [2T1:6] + “*You did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave to fear but you received the spirit of sonship*” [Rom 8:15] Mary Whitehouse said she was as nervous as a kitten the 1<sup>st</sup> time you ever spoke up! The **important** thing about this is that Gideon was **aware** of his weakness and therefore was crying out to God! Some people **are** hopeless, but they **think** they are great! So we can go to **God** and ask Him!

\***Second**, God uses those who are **willing** to work **quietly** in a corner, without any **public recognition**! Sadly, many Xians want recognition for what they do! Not Gideon! He was threshing “*wheat in the winepress*” [6:11] indoors! Threshing was normally done in the open field where the wind could blow the chaff away! Here, because the Midianites were scouring the countryside, Gideon had to work in an obscure corner, unnoticed! Gideon was a ‘no-body’! He had the job of **guarding** and **hiding** the wheat “*to keep it from the Midianites*” [6:11] No public profile!

Lord Jesus was **30 years** in humble circumstances; carpenter’s shop; at home – no record of anyone saying anything ‘special’ about Him – ie He **hid** His divinity. No one ever said, when they saw Jesus, ‘I saw God today in the street’! He **emptied Himself** of all appearances of Divinity and acted like an ordinary Man. It would have been **easy** for Him to have said publicly, who He was and what He was going to do, but He kept it until it was absolutely necessary! **APP** People are willing to work hard for **public** recognition – in **politics, business**. I’ve met many people who love telling you what they have achieved and what they’ve done! Now, who has heard of Boris Kornfeld? Yet, quietly, without any prospect of public acclaim or recognition, Boris Kornfeld was greatly used by God. No one ‘**saw**’ his testimony and honesty! But we will all see it at the Great Day – Do you **believe** in the that Great Day? It by faith! Here is Kornfeld’s story told by Chuck Colson [**Story of Boris Kornfeld**]!

\***Third**, the man God uses is **willing** to **sacrifice** something of **value** to the Lord! Gideon offered a goat – in a time of **famine**! In a moment, in one blaze, and it is all **gone**! What’s the point of it? Remember **David** pouring out the **water** that cost his faithful servants so much! If we can’t understand that, or if we think it was **stupid**, maybe its because we know **nothing** of the **spiritual rewards** of self-denial for the

**Lord? APP** Do you know that any type of ‘success’ demands sacrifice? Athletes, politicians, businessmen, all make a sacrifice in order to give priority to their one consuming passion! What is your consuming passion? People can do without their tea in order to go to the pop concert (or snatch a sandwich – to get to the rugby on time) but not to the Bible Study! What does that show? Their priority!

\***Four**, the people God uses are witnesses in their **own territory** first! No such thing as a godly man who is a great blessing to people at the church, but at home he is a tyrant! The proverb ‘Charity begins at home!’ *“They made me keeper (take care) of the vineyards, but my own vineyard I have not kept (neglected)”* [Sol 1:6] Gideon had to put in order his own house! **[Read 6:25-27]** *“tear down the alter of Baal that your **father** has”*[25] Again Gideon *“but because he was **afraid** of his family he did it at night rather than in the daytime”*[27b] Likewise **Moses** before he led the Israelites out, was to **circumcise** his own son! **[Ex 4:24-26]!**

**APP** Many people can solve **other folk’s** problems but not their own! People can ‘**see**’ what wrong with other people’s lives, but are not willing to attend to their own! **Elders** who are involved in other organisations while neglecting their own congregations!

\***Fifth**, God will use us, when we are **willing** to give God **all the glory!** **[Read 7:2]** God whittled down to 300 the number of Gideon’s army! They were outnumbered 6 to 1 so that God would get **all the glory!** \*It is said of **George Frideric Handel** (of Messiah fame) when he came to London in 1711 with his opera ‘Rinaldo’ he was **brilliant!** But he **knew** it! Everyone could **tell** he was a **proud** man! It was **obvious** that he knew he was being **admired!** But he got into financial trouble. Eventually he became a bankrupt! He was one day in his room – all alone – at his **lowest** point ever! Dejected! An ‘idea’ came into his mind – it ‘grabbed’ him – he got out his pen, and wrote – and wrote - and wrote - and wrote – for **24 days** he never came out of that room! He was uninterrupted for all that time. He had written **Handel’s Messiah!** When he was **emptied of himself**, he had written the finest piece of music, perhaps the world has ever heard! **APP** When we **lose ourselves** in the **gospel**, that’s when God can use us!

The Gideon **symbol** of the **jar** – it is a jar, a pitcher – but **inside** is a light. Inside each Xian there is the Light, the Spirit of God. It is **when**, like Gideon and his men, we **break** that outside pitcher of **ourselves** and let **that** Light shine inside us, then God will use us! Let the light shine on Jesus Christ – not on us! Have you noticed the **contrast** between the music of today and what we have said re Handel? At Pop concerts, there are lights – all shining **on the performer** – on The Spice Girls, or George Michael, or whoever. When the greatest act of history was being performed – at the **Cross** of Calvary, the **greatest Performer** this world has ever known – there was **total darkness!** The Humility of the Son of God!

**Nothing** can be **compared** to **genuine humility** – we can never be used by God until we get rid of self and promote Jesus **only!**