

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – May 9, 2020

The Lord be with you.

Oh, for the gift to see ourselves as others see us. Scottish poet Robert Burns long for that gift, but I see in God's word and even greater gift and that is the gift to see ourselves as God sees us.

It could be huge for us.

Then we're going to look at this today in the Old Testament Book of Judges, Chapter 6, is here was the back story. As the nation of Israel is on lockdown, this is a low point in Israel's history. Judge 6 opens by saying that the Israelites did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, and the people have been brought to their knees by the Midianites. Who now for seven years, have been raiding Israel right at harvest time to steal their harvest and get on their camels and right out of town. So, in Judges 6, The supermarket shelves are empty, the nation is economically bankrupt, and it is at this dark time in the life of a nation that God calls a man the most unlikely of men and in calling him helps him to see himself as God sees him. And that changes everything for the man and for the nation.

Verse 11 I read, now the Angel of the Lord came and sat under the oak at Ophra which belonged to Joash, as his son, Gideon, was beating out wheat in the wine press, to hide from the Midianites.

Note a couple of things here as I talked about the angel of the Lord in the Old Testament, the Angel of the Lord, not an angel, but the angel of the Lord is actually the pre-incarnate pre-Bethlehem appearing of Jesus Christ on earth, in fact, in later in this chapter in verses 14-16, and so forth, the Angel of the Lord is identified as the Lord God, so He received the angel of the Lord. He's coming and he's sitting under an oak tree where the man Gideon is beating out the wheat, he's threshing it in a wine press in order to hide it from the Midianites.

During normal times, they threshed wheat in an open field or on high ground, so that the wind would blow away the chaff. And the heavier green would fall to the ground and in normal times, they used animals to thresh the grain. But here they are in a new normal and Gideon is desperately trying to hide what little harvest, he has and he is in a pit in the ground he is in a wine press. Threshing the grain, not with animals, but all by himself.

It's a small harvest, and it is pitiful, to see what has happened to the nation, and this is when the angel of the Lord appears to Gideon, saying, "The Lord is with you, you mighty warrior.

I'm almost going to laugh here. A really here is Gideon who was hiding from the Midianites, and the angel of the Lord says to him, "The Lord is with you, you mighty warrior.

And I just wondered, does Gideon think that this stranger is mocking him, I mean, he looks anything, to be but a mighty warrior who has God with him and so Gideon answers, But, sir, if the Lord is with us, why then has all this happened to us and where are all His wonderful deeds that our ancestors recounted to us? But now the Lord has cast us off. And here we see Gideon as he is believing the lie his believing the old lie of Satan believing that God has cast off His people believing that God is not with them. Gideon will grant, he will concede that in former days God

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once did great deeds for the ancestors. But that was then, this is now, God has cast us off, but the angel of the Lord takes what was a common everyday greeting among people and he speaks it into the life of Gideon "The Lord is with you, the Lord has not... Has not cast you off.

In fact, in Deuteronomy 31:6, as he was in the wilderness, the Lord God made them this promise be strong and bold, have no fear, or dread of them because it is the Lord your God who goes with you, He will not fail you or forsake you, the Lord is with you, get in. Note the present tense of the words, "the Lord is with you, you are a mighty warrior, as God looks at Gideon he sees far more than meets the eye, he sees through a man who is hiding out in fear to see Gideon as God had created Gideon to be. He sees the man as he truly is. This is the same God who called Abraham, the father of many nations before he had any children, the same God who called "Peter the Rock and believe me, Peter looked to be anything but a rock.

Oh, for the gift to see ourselves as God sees us Mark, this is one of the great truths of scripture, that God right now sees you as he saw you before you were even born, God sees you as he created you to be. The angel of Lord comes to Gideon not shaming him not condemning him, but the Lord is with you, you mighty warrior! God speaks to Gideon as God knows Gideon to be so that the problem, we see is not the Midianites, it's not. The problem is the Israelites and not seeing themselves as God sees them.

Verse 14 I read on, then the Lord turned to Gideon and said Go in this might of yours. What might? Well, himself as God sees him, "The Lord is with you, you mighty warrior go in this might of yours and deliver Israel from the hand of Midian I hear by commission you. But Gideon responded, but sir how can I deliver Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh and I am the least in my family.

You ever talk to yourself like that?

You got the wrong guy, Lord, I'm just a nobody and the Lord said to Gideon, but I will be with you. Gideon, it's really not about you anyway, it's about who I am, and I will be with you.

And the rest, well, the rest is history. You can read it in Judges Chapter 7 as Gideon with an army of 300 men armed with only trumpets and broken jars, put to flight an army of 135,000.

Oh, for the gift to see ourselves as God sees us. The Lord is with you, you mighty warriors.

I'm Tim Smith a fellow traveler on the pilgrim way.

Thanks for listening, until next time...

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