

Gilded By The Holy Spirit

Scripture: Judges 6: 33-35
Date: May 2, 2021

INTRODUCTION

SPRING

Alberta spring isn't one season – it's many. You can wake up in the morning quite chilly and need to bundle up - yet only a few hours later we can ditch layers because the weather has warmed up greatly!! Clothing / coats are not just for modesty as they are also functional providing protection for the weather and provision of pockets.

We layer because we have different needs but life also provides different needs and changes which impacts our faith as well.

GIDEON

The story of Gideon in Judges 6 illustrates the many changes and challenges in life. Israel is in a period of history following Moses and Joshua and yet not the Kings of Saul and David. It was a time when leadership of the nation – especially militarily – was done by a series of judges. Gideon is one of these judges

The story of Gideon can be looked at in 3 (or more) different acts but each of these acts surround a common thread with a drama, a doubt and a deliverance. The verse – I believe – that ties them together is vs. 34 where the Holy Spirit came upon Gideon. The Holy Spirit coming upon Gideon can be best translated as the Holy Spirit 'clothing' Gideon. A type of dressing Gideon where one puts on a form of a garment of power and blessing from God.

COMPLIANCE - WORSHIP

DRAMA - GOD CALLS GIDEON – JUDGES 6: 1-24

The backdrop to the first story is of Israel's faithlessness where God has allowed the Midianite and other nations to invade Israel. Israel hides to escape the harshness of these invading countries and ultimately calls out to God for help / for hope. God sends a prophet to encourage them and then God then sent an angel to Gideon.

The angel encourages Gideon by telling him that God is with him and that Gabriel is a mighty warrior that God is going to use to save Israel.

DOUBTS

Gideon's first response to this engagement is a doubt of God's presence – where is God in the midst of this calamity (vs. 13). Gideon's second response is a doubt of God's promise – who me? (vs. 15) The calling to Gideon speaks to the weakness of Gideon because his clan and tribe and family grouping is not prestigious or powerful.

DELIVERANCE

Gideon asks for a moment to get an offering to the angel bBecause he's not sure about his encounter – vs. 17. IF I've found favour with you – THEN let me bring an offering to you. Gideons' offering is instantly devoured by the Lord in a flash and while the angel of the Lord disappeared - but the presence and the peace of the Lord remained

INTERACTION / APPLICATION

There are parts of our lives that have changed and have been a challenge to our faith. Yet – while God continues to speak to us we (like Gideon) doubt God's presence in the midst of this broken world and God's power in us through this broken world. But God continues to give us peace and God continues to give us a calling.

CONFIDENCE - WILLING*DRAMA- GOD ENCOURAGES GIDEON – JUDGES 6: 33-40*

The story of the testing of God by Gideon has found much telling in the Christian community. The Midianites invaded the land – again and then the Spirit comes upon Gideon . Gideon sends a message – through a trumpet blast – for all the armed men to come and join him for a battle. And they come!!

DOUBTS

Yet Gideon - despite the words of God and despite the willingness of the people - still isn't certain. He seeks a further sign of God despite affirming that God's word has spoken – vs. 36. So he asks God to provide a supernatural divination / sign.

DELIVERANCE

Gideon asks that God would make an evening's dew only on a fleece of a sheepskin. That the ground around it would be dry but the sheepskin would be wet. AND IT DOES !!! The ground is dry but the wool is wet - so wet that when it is wrung out there is a bowlful of water.

Gideon asks again for the reverse and God makes it happen – AGAIN !! Gideon asks for a proof and God gives a puddle !!!

DUTY - INTERACTION / APPLICATION

There are times when God's presence and providence is clear and we know who God is and who we are. But the calling seems ----- big and our confidence seems small. We also seek a confirmation but we desire a confirmation on a super scale.

God does give us signs – revelations if you will. Signs through His written word of revelation. Signs through the confirmation of His people and signs through the power of prayer and peace. Signs that only the Holy Spirit could reveal before us. Signs that only the Holy Spirit could confirm to us and signs that only the Holy Spirit could comfort us with.

COMPETENCE - WINNING

DRAMA - GOD EMPOWERS GIDEON – JUDGES 7: 1-25

The third story is of the battle itself where Gideon and his army of 32,000 men were camped ready for battle against a foe that was so big that you couldn't count all the enemies. But God directed Gideon to shrink forces in order to show His power in this battle – vs. 2.

God allowed (vs. 3) all those who were afraid to leave and 22,000 men left and returned to the home. In v. 4-8 the 10,000 men were reduced to 300 by a simple judgement of how they drank water!! God had reduced a fighting force of 32,000 persons to 300!!

DOUBTS

Gideon clearly isn't certain about this plan and vs. 10 speaks of God's awareness of Gideon's doubt.

DELIVERS

So God directs Gideon to sneak to the edges of the enemy camp and there he hears the enemies talking – in fear – of a dream. These enemies conceded the fight to Israel and that the power of the sword of Gideon would overpower them. So Gideon worships and then Gideon works. The army works to defeat the massive enemy army through a surprise night attack that defeated all the enemy armies.

INTERACTION / APPLICATION

God calls us into action. God calls us into activity. Having been challenged and having been comforted God continues to guide into messy massive situations and God occasionally reduces our resources. He does this so that the power and energy is from Him and so that the glory and praise go to Him.

Yet we can see the context and wonder if the way forward is too daunting. There are so few reasons why we can succeed and there are so few resources. Yet God's business is often less about winning than about wooing. Sometimes God's business is about inviting us in the journey about involving us in the journey.

The Holy Spirit clothes us with a capability that goes beyond our expectation and even beyond our capacity.

APPLICATION / CONCLUSION

GILDED MEANING

Gilded is a older word meaning a covering that increases the value of something - often with gold. Material objects have a fine gold layer to give a greater importance and value to them. In a sense they are clothed / covered to improve them.

HOLY SPIRIT OUTSIDE- GIDEON

In a way Gideon was gilded or covered or clothed with the Holy Spirit. A clothing to make Him compliant to God's calling, to make Him comfortable with His doubts and to make him competent to face the challenges ahead.

Despite Gideon's doubts – each time – God delivered. This is unusual in many of the biblical stories but not unusual in God's grace. That God would give proof of His presence and power. The Holy Spirit came upon Gideon clothing him and covering him. The Holy Spirit came upon Gideon encouraging him and empowering him.

HOLY SPIRIT INSIDE (WITH JESUS)

This clothing – this gilding – this covering was mighty and powerful for Gideon BUT it was temporary. Gideon's ongoing battle with doubt finally caught up with him in chapter 8 where the snare of gold caught his eye (and heart).

But we know - in this Easter season - the power of the Christ. The son of the living God. The saviour of the world. The ruler of the world. Who clothes us – with the Holy Spirit – not just outside and temporary but inside and permanent.

We are given a garment of righteousness - Isaiah 61: 10. We are promised the clothing of the Holy Spirit within us - Romans 8: 11. We are promised the power of the Holy Spirit for the church - Luke 24: 49. We are promised the power of the Holy Spirit for the believer - John 14: 26 and we are promised the power of the Holy Spirit upon us - the armour of God – Ephesians 6.

A clothing power that we may know our calling.

A clothing power that we may that we may believe in our confidence

A clothing power that we may live our competence

AMEN