Articles by Paul Plubell

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Gideon (Sep 1956)

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I would like that you read with me from the Book of Judges, chapter 6, verse 11, through to chapter 7, verse 7, and then from verse 16 of that chapter to verse 21. May God bless to us the reading of His Holy Word.

One cannot but be amazed at the repeated apostasy of Israel. The Book of Judges alone records that seven times the children of Israel went into apostasy, and that seven times over the Lord raised up a man to deliver them from the servitude of their enemies, and to lead them back into the blessing of Almighty God.

When we come to chapter 6, we see the people in bondage to the Midianites, and if we had read farther back, we would have noticed the message of the Lord by the prophet to the people, “Ye have not obeyed My voice.” That which brought Israel into bondage was disobedience to God. When disobedience took place, the Midianite moved in. “Midian” means strife. What a sad condition must have existed in the land with hunger, enmity, strife, and disobedience among God’s beloved people.

How wonderful of the Lord to remind us that, regardless of how grave the situation, God had a man. I am prepared to say that God will always have a man. Remember this, God is always prepared to use a man, or a group of men, to lead his people back into fellowship with Himself. Such a man was Gideon. I would like to inspire in the hearts of all a desire to follow his example,

to be a man of God in the face of out-standing difficulties.

I would like you to notice this man. The Bible says that when the Lord found him, he was threshing wheat. Mr. Newbury points out that he was threshing wheat “in” the winepress. In the midst of starvation and bondage I see a lone man, Gideon, down in the winepress threshing wheat. He was going to see that his people were fed. Regardless of what else would come or go, the people that belonged to Gideon were going to feed upon wheat. Notice the place where Gideon was, in the winepress, the place where the blood of the grape was trampled out, the place typifies Calvary. If you expect to feed the people of God, O, young man, listen! If you aspire to feed God’s people you will have to stay by the winepress. There is always one means through which God provides for His people; it is through the man that dwells near the cross of Calvary.

Repeatedly in the Word of God, the simile is used that we, His people, are the sheep of His pasture. Sheep in the Scriptural sense do not need to be sheared, they need to be fed. It is amazing that in the Bible sheep shearing is only mentioned three times, and each time in connection with evil. How anxious God is to leave on record that He would have His people fed.

The Lord found Gideon in the place of the cross preparing the finest of the wheat in order to feed the people. Notice how He addresses him, “The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.” God reckons things in a different light to what we do, a man need not be in the forefront of the battle to be considered courageous. He may, like Gideon, under trying circumstances be quietly

preparing food for the people of God. God recognizes valour in the man that maintains something of communion with Himself.

Immediately the Lord addressed Gideon, he identified himself with the sad condition of the nation. This is one thing that is always found in a God-sent leader. He does not stand aside and accuse others; like Nehemiah he confesses, “I and my people have sinned.” Gideon began to speak to the Lord about the state of declension, but the Lord gave him one command, “I have sent thee, go in this thy might.” With this word and commendation from the Lord that timid man became the man of valour, and he left the winepress to lead the people of God to victory. God is still looking for men like that; men who will dwell with Christ near the cross; men who will bask in His love and feed His people, and go forth to triumph in the power of the Lord.

Did you ever think of how many answered Gideon’s call for volunteers? Thirty thousand. I would to God that it were as easy today to get volunteers for the work of Christ. Thirty thousand men left everything and, with a man little known, went to win the battle for the Lord under his leadership.

The Lord said, “The people are too many… lest Israel should vaunt themselves against Me saying, mine own hand hath saved me.” Moreover, the Lord told Gideon that He was going to test them. God never raises up a man without first of all testing that man. The test was, “Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return.” Twenty-two thousand faint-hearted men immediately turned their backs upon the Lord’s cause. This was the first test, the test of faint-heartedness. No one can win a

victory for God with a faint heart. If you desire to serve God and Christ, you will have to lose all thoughts of being faint-hearted, because you will find out that it takes stamina and ability to carry on in the service of our Lord Jesus Christ. Oh! If you are convinced of your stand for the Lord and for His Word, do not be afraid. Do not be like these people who, when the test was given, turned their backs and went away faint-hearted.

There were ten thousand left, but the Lord said that these were too many, so He devised another test. They were to be taken to the water, and the man that stooped to drink, lapping the water like a dog, was to be set to one side, and whoever bowed to drink was to be set on the other side. Three hundred men drank, lapping the water to their mouths by their hands as they went along, but the rest bowed, taking time to quench their thirst.

If the first test was faintheartedness, the second was half-heartedness. For a moment the three hundred men paused, snatching the water to their mouths, for the King's business required haste. Young brother, what we need is men that have all their hearts in the things of God; not faint-hearted, or half-hearted, but willing-hearted men.

These three hundred men went forth to battle. In one hand each held a pitcher, an earthen pitcher with a light in it, and in the other each held a trumpet. That night, in three companies, they broke the pitchers, and held their lamps in their hands.

Paul says, "God Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts." Do you not see the lesson? That vessel is you possessed with the light of testimony, and that trumpet is your confession of Christ

as Lord. They blew the trumpets, and also broke the pitchers. Paul says, “God commanded the light to shine out,” and then adds, “We have this treasure in earthen vessels.” It is impossible to blow the trumpet and not let the light shine through a broken pitcher. Paul says, “We have this treasure in earthen vessels, and then adds, “We are oppressed and afflicted on every side,” and then he gives the account of what had happened to him in the service of the gospel. Paul, as a vessel was broken. The more experiences he had of this type, the more the light shone forth. If there is anything that we turn away from, it is not the blowing of the trumpet, but the breaking of the vessel. You know, brethren, self is the great enemy of our testimony. How tenaciously we hold to that which keeps the light from shining. Thank God, when the vessel is broken the light does go forth.

Our victory as the people of God may be unusual, unusual in this, God may have to put His hand on us and crush us; He may have to break the earthen vessel.

I sat beside a young woman who had been a stalwart Christian in earlier days; she had loved the Lord and sought to please Him. I had gone to her because the word had come that her husband had died on the battle field of France. I tried to console that young girl. She said to me, “Mr. Plubell, when the word came that my husband was dead, I had only one cry, “Take me home, Lord, take me home.” But she added, “I have gotten over that now, and I find that it will take more grace to live for the Lord, and to raise my boy for Him than ever it would to go home to Heaven.” You see, God had removed the one in her life who had been preventing the light from shining out.

Oh! May God raise up in our day, men like Gideon who will live near the cross, who will feast upon His Son, who will feed the people of God regardless of what comes or goes, feed them with the finest of the wheat; men who will answer the call, not faint-heartedly, or half-heartedly, but willingly; men who will say, “Let my light shine forth cost what it may, and help me, Lord, to blow the trumpet.” If such be among us, God will give the victory. May He do so until the day break, and the shadows flee away.