

Judges 6:22-35 – The Doubting Deliverer Prepares for Duty

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Why are some people always late? Why do students not always do well in their exams? Why do some people get frostbites(冻疮) or freeze to death? Why do some marriages struggle so much? Why do people faint in marathons? What is the common answer here? The common theme is: More often than not, they lacked proper preparation.

Now not preparing sometimes causes some temporary or minimum problems, but there are some things, if you are not well prepared for them, that can cause great hardships and harm...even having eternal consequences.

Today you will see how God moved Gideon, the deliverer, albeit a doubting deliverer, to prepare himself and his people for the deliverance from the terror they faced from the Midianites, the Amalekites, and the Arabians.

Our headings are:

The Deliverer Prepares Himself

The Deliverer Prepares Israel

The Deliverer Prepares Soldiers

Our goals are: **That you will see the need for personal preparation in order to be fit for spiritual duty to your Savior.**

The Deliverer Prepares himself

22 Now Gideon perceived that He was the **Angel of the LORD**. So Gideon said, "Alas, O **Lord GOD!** For I have seen the Angel of the LORD face to face." 23 Then the LORD said to him, "Peace be with you; do not fear, you shall not die."

1. Gideon, whose name meant “cutter down,” thought he was going to die because he had met God directly. He had met the pre-incarnate (道成肉身前的) form of Jesus. He knew he was sinful and God was holy and sin and holiness did not mix. But all his uncertainties were quickly assuaged (被减轻) by his God. **No Christian needs to be afraid of his Father.** You call him “Daddy.” You can and should meet with him regularly!

2. How did God assuage Gideon’s fears? God strengthened his faith. How did God strengthen his faith? His Word!

a. God told him he had peace with him. Gideon trusted in his coming Savior. **This is the only ground for peace!**

b. God told him he would preserve his life.

Gideon received God’s Word. He was then prepared to fight!

Isn’t Jesus is called the Prince of Peace – your peace? And doesn’t he secure that peace forever?

Luke 2:14 "Glory to God in the highest, and on **earth peace**, goodwill toward men!"

John 14:27 "**Peace I leave with you**, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

Romans 5:1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, **we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ**,

And with peace in your soul and peace with God you can now **face the world and all its challenges**. And with this peace you **can properly build the kingdom**, even with war, turmoil, and disease around.

24 So Gideon built an altar there to the LORD, and called it The-LORD-Is-Peace. To this day it is still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

3. As a sign of the right relationship with God, Gideon then built an altar (祭坛) to the Lord and named it “The-Lord-Is-Peace.” (Jehovah Shalom) But why build an altar? **An altar represented worship**. And what does every Christian do above all else? Worship! **Someone who says he is a Christian but doesn’t worship is not a Christian.** But the altar also **represented God’s judgment**...the judgment God would mete out on the Midianites so his people could go free.

The Deliverer Prepares Israel

25 Now it came to pass the same night that the LORD said to him, "**Take your father’s young bull**, the second bull of seven years old, and **tear down the altar of Baal that your father has**, and **cut down the wooden image** that is beside it;

1. God then instructed Gideon to prepare Israel for battle against their enemies. In order to do this, Gideon had to stop idolatry (偶像崇拜) . And he had to start at home. He had to clean up his father’s house.

2. How would Gideon do that?

a. Gideon had to take his father’s young and strong, 7 year old bull that his father was waiting to sacrifice to

Baal (it seems). It was proper for Gideon to take the bull because God has all rights to, and owns, everything. **But why a 7 year old bull?** The 7 year old bull was representative of the 7 years of rebellion of Israel. For 7 years they had felt God's justice... from the time that bull was born. Now that rebellion had to die!

b. Gideon had to tear down the altar of Baal where his father and Israel worshipped – destroy it completely.

c. Gideon had to destroy Baal's wooden image nearby. This wooden image was an Asherah that promoted sexual sins. The Syriac Bible translates Ashera as Estereh – from which we get the word Easter...or fertility.

This is your call too. The difference is that your weapons are spiritual. **You fight with the Word of God.**

2Corinthians 10: 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,(4 我们争战的兵器, 本不是属血气的, 乃是在神面前有能力, 可以攻破坚固的营垒, 5 将各样的计谋, 各样阻挡人认识神的那些自高之事一概攻破了, 又将人所有的心意夺回, 使他都顺服基督;)

26 "and build an altar to the LORD your God on top of this rock in the proper arrangement, and take the second bull and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the image which you shall cut down."

d. Gideon had to replace that idolatrous altar with a good altar to Jehovah. After all, Israel could not expect God's blessings without bowing the knee to God. The sacrifice of that 7 year old bull showed their sins were gone. And aren't you too called to build up the **knowledge of that altar where Christ was sacrificed?** This is evangelism (传福音) .

3. But notice the uniqueness of the arrangement of how the altar was to be built. They had to build God's altar over Baal's altar, showing a conquering of Baal. And they had to take the wooden image – the Asherah- nearby and use it to make sacrifice to God. This was a conquering of Asherah.

27 So Gideon took ten men from among his servants and did as the LORD had said to him. But because he feared his father's household and the men of the city too much to do it by day, he did it by night.

4. Gideon, with the assistance of others who believed as he, did as God said. It seems that they did this work by night so they would not be hindered. He surely wasn't afraid.

And isn't it true that we must use wisdom in our work? Sometimes it is proper to be silent. For example, if you argued with a Muslim that the Koran is wrong because it says that Joseph was sold for coins when coins were not invented, how does that advance the cause of Christ? Or if you think you have to fix every error in our political system, how will you have time to teach truth at home? Wisdom is essential for effective service in Christ's kingdom.

28 And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, there was the altar of Baal, torn down; and the wooden image that was beside it was cut down, and the second bull was being offered on the altar which had been built. 29 So they said to one another, "Who has done this thing?" And when they had inquired and asked, they said, "Gideon the son of Joash has done this thing."

5. The next morning the men of the city were worried when they saw what happened to their idol. Do you realize how far Israel had sunk in 7 years? The must have had some idea that Gideon was a man of orthodox religious convictions and that he was no friend of Baal, so they pointed the finger on him.

But does it matter if the whole world were against you when you are doing what is right? If people laugh you for not drinking and driving, does it matter? If people mock you for going to church on the Sabbath (安息日), does it make you back away...or hide the fact from them? If people jeer and call you a prude (假正经) because you live a pure life, is that a problem?

30 Then the men of the city said to Joash, "Bring out your son, that he may die, because he has torn down the altar of Baal, and because he has cut down the wooden image that was beside it."

6. Instead of praising Gideon for removing filth (污秽之物) from their midst, they treated Gideon as filth and wanted to destroy him. Idolatry leads to bloodshed – like Nebuchadnezzar! Roman Catholics killed many who opposed their idolatry. Further, look how the mob (乌合之众) started ruling instead of God! With no God, there always is wicked rule. They didn't have 2 or 3 witnesses. They didn't have a trial. They didn't listen to Gideon. They didn't wait for a judge! They wanted him dead. They wanted their deliverer dead.

Does that remind you of anything?

Mark 15:14 Then Pilate said to them, "Why, what evil has He done?" But they cried out all the more, "Crucify Him!"

31 But Joash said to all who stood against him, "**Would you plead for Baal?** Would you save him? Let the one who would plead for him be put to death by morning! If he is a god, let him plead for

himself, because his altar has been torn down!" 32 Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal, saying, "Let Baal plead against him, because he has torn down his altar." (32 所以当日人称基甸为耶路巴力, 意思说: "他拆毁巴力的坛, 让巴力与他争论。")

7. It was only paternal pleadings that saved Gideon from being killed. And Joash did it in a roundabout way. He asked the men of the city why they would fight for someone who could not fight for himself. Joash knew that all the gods of this world were nothing. Maybe he had followed the crowd in the past, but when he realized the evil that was coming to his family because of the idols, he woke up. Consider the similarity between Muslims who believe they have the duty to kill those who disagree with them and their God...even to the point this week claiming to have the right to kill Christians who read the Bible?

Shouldn't you pray that they may see the hopelessness of their god... a god whom they have to defend?

The Deliverer Prepares the Soldiers

33 Then all the Midianites and Amalekites, the people of the East, gathered together; and they crossed over and encamped in the **Valley of Jezreel**.

1. Then the enemies gathered together as usual, ready to steal and destroy the Promised Land, the land from which the Messiah would come. And they assembled in the Valley of Jezreel, a beautiful, rich, and fruitful land. Surely this was a sad sight for Gideon to see from above...but it was also an incentive to fight! Seeing starvation makes you want to feed the hungry. Persecution of Christians makes you want to pray. And dangers make you want to fight.

34 But the **Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon**; then he blew the trumpet, and the Abiezrites gathered behind him.

2. So with himself ready, and with the idolatry removed from among the people, Gideon then called the people of God together to get their weapons and prepare to fight the enemies and gain back the freedom they lost.

3. And the people came, all blood brothers. None was excused from the fight. Notice how God worked so that they people became united. This was the special working of God's Holy Spirit who moved and blessed Gideon. He emboldened him to fight! (The Holy Spirit did not come at Pentecost; he came with special gifts for a special time at Pentecost.) **Does this sound familiar?**

Acts 1:8 "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Acts 4:31 And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

4. Surely when Gideon blew the trumpet the sound was clear; it was a battle sound. An unclear sound would have misled and proved dangerous, but with God working in him, he gave clear directions to the soldiers. When reformation comes upon the church, the Devil and his surrogates (代言人) fall to their knees. That was about to happen!

35 And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh, who also gathered behind him. He also sent messengers to Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali; and they came up to meet them.

5. Even the far-a-way tribes to the north and west, who were likely to say they didn't want anything to do with the troubles and maintain their neutrality, came for battle for the rest of their brothers.

Conclusion:

Gideon had to prepare and strengthen his weak faith. So God spoke, he believed, and he became strong. He wasn't a follower of Baal, but he wasn't strong in the faith. **Then he had to prepare his people** and weed out (清除) idolatry. This was hard, but he worked alongside those who would help him. Then he called on all Israel to join him to destroy the enemy.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: **You are most effective** for your family, for the church, and for Christ's kingdom when you are strong in faith. Doubt limits your work because fear conquers you. **You are most effective** when your family and church are clean. Discord distracts from Divine duty. So ask God to strengthen your faith and ask God to purify your people. But don't forget the bigger picture. Your Messiah (弥赛亚) was the one who ultimately destroyed the Devil and set you free for eternity! He gave you security and prosperity in your soul. You are his servants doing his bidding and doing it with his strength.

Finally, God has no use for those who are in opposition to him. You will be consumed like chaff in hell's fire. So may it be that you will call on him to add value to you. He will apply Christ's work on the cross to your account. He will call you his child. He will guarantee you an eternal inheritance (永恒的基业).