

Jehovah – Shalom - The Lord is My Peace

Judges 6:24

Introduction:

1. Before Gideon could become Israel's deliverer, he had to first come to know God in a very real, personal, and reverent way
2. To accomplish this, God revealed Himself in a special way to Gideon
 - a. He came to Gideon in the form of the "angel of the Lord"
 - b. This is the OT revelation of the 2nd person of the trinity
 - c. He visited Hagar in the wilderness when she fled from Sarah
 - d. Moses saw Him in the burning bush
 - e. Balaam saw him on the road of disobedience after his donkey saw him
3. This meeting with the angel of the Lord was the turning point in the life of Gideon
4. One of the important keys to serving God well is to know God well and to have a right relationship with Him
 - a. There must be a closeness to God
 - b. There must be an understanding of God
 - c. There must be an awe of God if service is to be performed faithfully and gallantly
 - d. Many believers have a distant, cold, vague relationship with God
5. Today so much emphasis is put on the methods and programs for doing God's word that we forget the main thing, the relationship with Him

I. God's Care – vs 12-13

A. Proclaimed – vs 11-12

11 And there came an angel of the LORD, and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abiezrite: and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites. 12 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.

1. When God "I am with thee" He was saying volumes concerning His care for His people
2. To be "with" His people means...
 - a) *To be for His people*
 - b) *To be concerned for His people*
 - c) *To provide for His people*
 - d) *To care for His people*
3. He had heard their cry of distress, he had sent a prophet to prepare them for deliverance (6:8-10) He had come to Gideon
4. Gideon was trying to thresh out some wheat "by the winepress" to hide it from the Midianites
5. Things were bad in Israel, but God cared
6. The great evidence of God's care for us is His presence with us
 - a) *Joseph was sold into slavery, but he prospered because "the Lord was with him" – Gen 39:2*
 - b) *He was later unjustly thrown into prison, "but the Lord was with him" – Gen 39:23*
7. When the Lord is with us we need not fear His lack of care for us

B. Protested – vs 13

13 And Gideon said unto him, Oh my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.

- It was hard for Gideon to believe that the Lord was with Israel when things were going so poorly
 - Gideon looked around and saw only fear and poverty
 - He could not see God doing anything for Israel
 - Gideon protested that God did not care for Israel
 - Similar charges are made against God in our day
1. Justice of God – “Why then is all of this befallen us?”
 - a) *This question blames God for Israel’s troubles*
 - b) *“If God really cares for us, they why is He letting all these troubles come upon us?”*
 - c) *This is a question that put the blame for Israel’s trouble on God instead of the real cause.*
 - d) *6:1 – “Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord” and that was the main cause of their problems*
 - e) *Gideon’s own father had an altar of Baal in his own home*
 - f) *Gideon shut his eyes to the real and obvious cause which was right before his own eyes and blamed God instead*
 - g) *We will never solve our problems until we come to grips with the real cause of our troubles*
 - h) *Isn’t it amazing that men envy and hate and then blame God for wars and fighting*
 - i) *Isn’t it amazing that men live immorally and then wonder where God is when they are plagued with venereal diseases*
 - j) *Men are greedy and violent and then when crime fills the land, we wonder where the God of love is*
 - k) *The problem is not God’s inadequacy, it is man’s iniquity*
 2. Power of God – “Where are the miracles...”
 - a) *The next protest of Gideon has to do with the power of God*
 - b) *If God could really do all the miracles that people said he could do, then why deliver Israel miraculously from the Midianites?*
 - c) *Gideon was mistaking God’s willingness and God’s power*
 - d) *If God is not willing, then we conclude that God is not able*
 - e) *Israel’s sins made God unwilling to help them*

Isa 59:1 Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: 2 But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.
 3. Faithfulness of God – “The Lord has forsaken us”
 - a) *Here was Gideon’s last protesting complaint*
 - b) *Gideon accuses God of being unfaithful to Israel*
 - c) *The reality was that Israel had been unfaithful to God*
 - d) *Before Gideon becomes Israel’s deliverer, he must get right with God*
 - e) *We cannot serve God well if we are not right with God ourselves*

II. Gideon's Commission – vs 14

A. The Person

1. Gideon was not a likely candidate for the job of delivering Israel
 - a) *He is filled with doubts and unbelief*
 - b) *He is cynical of God's care*
 - c) *He was an obscure farmer, living in an insignificant village about 16 miles from Jericho*
 - d) *He was busy hiding grain from the Midianites*
2. God referred to him as a "mighty man of valor" – vs 12
 - a) *This was a surprise to Gideon as much as anyone else*
 - b) *Nothing in Gideon's life indicated that he was a "mighty man of valor"*
 - c) *Remember that God sees not as man sees – God looks on the heart, man looks on the outward appearance*
 - d) *"Mighty man of valor" was something only known to God at that time*
 - e) *Soon Gideon will demonstrate that God was right*
3. God calls many into service who do not appear to have much promise
 - a) *Submit to God's plan and purpose for your life*
 - b) *He will make of you what He wants*
 - c) *God calls these people, then He gets the glory /not the person*

1Co 1:27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; 28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: 29 That no flesh should glory in his presence.

B. The Particulars

1. Personal Call – vs 14a

14 And the LORD looked upon him, and said...

 - a) *He made sure that Gideon knew that He was talking to him*
 - b) *God's calls are personal calls*
 - c) *Some think that they have been called, but the Lord never really has looked upon them*
 - d) *It is just as bad to try to be a Gideon when you are not called, as it is to not go when God calls.*
2. Priority of the Call – vs 14b – "Go"

14b ... and said, **Go** in this thy might...

 - a) *The character of the call indicated that this call be given top priority*
 - b) *This was a command – "Go" – not a suggestion*
 - c) *When God commands, it deserves our priority*
3. Power of the Call

14 And the LORD looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might...

 - a) *Not Gideon's own strength, but the strength he was to receive from God*
 - b) *Fortunately we do not have to serve God in our own strength*
 - c) *Though weak, we can say with Paul*

Php 4:13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.
 - d) *Through God's power the weak can become strong*
4. Promises with the Call

14... and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee? 16 And the LORD said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.

- a) *Gideon would save Israel from the Midianites – vs 14*
- b) *Gideon will smite the Midianites as one man – vs 16*
- c) *The Lord will be with Gideon – vs 16*

C. Protest About the Commission

15 And he said unto him, Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.

1. He Lacked Fortune
 - a) *Gideon protested that his family was poor*
 - b) *Money is not really a great problem solver*
2. He Lacked Fame
 - a) *He was “least in my father’s house”*
 - b) *Gideon admits that he had little rank, status and position*
 - c) *We do not need famous people in order to have a good Sunday service*
 - d) *Fame is not essential, but faith is and Gideon ended up in the hall of fame of faith in Heb 11*

III. God's Confirmation

17 And he said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, then shew me a sign that thou talkest with me.

A. The Matter of Confirmation

1. The call of God was beginning to get through to Gideon
2. Unbelief was fading – faith was growing
3. Gideon’s asking for a sign was not evidence of unbelief
 - a) *Gideon didn’t say, “Show me a sign that what you say is true”*
 - b) *Gideon said, “Show me a sign that you are talking to me”*
 - c) *Gideon wanted to make sure that this was a real experience and not imagination*
 - d) *He wants to make sure that his call is coming from God and he is not daydreaming*

B. The Means of Confirmation

18 Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee, and bring forth my present, and set it before thee. And he said, I will tarry until thou come again. 19 And Gideon went in, and made ready a kid, and unleavened cakes of an ephah of flour: the flesh he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot, and brought it out unto him under the oak, and presented it. 20 And the angel of God said unto him, Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and lay them upon this rock, and pour out the broth. And he did so. 21 Then the angel of the LORD put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and there rose up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. Then the angel of the LORD departed out of his sight.

1. Gideon decided to bring his guest some food to see how he would receive it
2. How the visitor received the gift would indicate if the guest was a heavenly visitor or someone posing as divine
3. The visitor told Gideon to put the meat and bread on a rock and pour the broth on them
4. Gideon did what he was told and fire came from the rock and consumed the flesh and bread
5. The angel of the Lord departed and Gideon knew that he was authentic
6. We ought to be as willing to sacrifice to the Lord as Gideon was - Meat and bread were scarce in this time

IV. The Comfort

A. Announcement of Peace

22 And when Gideon perceived that he was an angel of the LORD, Gideon said, Alas, O Lord GOD! for because I have seen an angel of the LORD face to face.
23 And the LORD said unto him, Peace be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die.

1. When Gideon figured out that he was face to face with God he was filled with fear
2. God met Gideon's need by giving him peace
3. This peace came from the angel of the Lord (2nd person of the trinity)
4. Christ is the only one who can give us true peace

B. The Altar of Peace – vs 24

24 Then Gideon built an altar there unto the LORD, and called it Jehovahshalom: unto this day it is yet in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

- This great event in Gideon's life demanded a memorial so he built an altar and named it Jehovah-shalom – the Lord our peace
 - Gideon has come a long way since the heavenly guest first came
1. Wisdom of His Faith
 - a) *Gideon's altar indicated he had learned the source of peace*
 - b) *He learned that God could bring peace*
 - c) *If Gideon is going to have personal peace and bring peace to Israel, then he will have to know the source of peace*
 2. Worship of His Faith
 - a) *An altar speaks of worship -- True faith, worships*
 - b) *Worship is essential if he is going to serve the Lord as Israel's deliverer*
 - c) *Worship and service go together*
 - d) *Those who do not worship well, will not serve well*
 3. Witness of His Faith
 - a) *The altar was also a witness of Gideon's faith*
 - b) *There is much courage here since Gideon built this altar to God near his father's altar to Baal*
 - c) *Gideon is not afraid to stand up and declare his loyalty to God even though those around him were worshipping Baal*
 - d) *If we are to take any stand for God, it will be before a hostile world*

V. Jehovah –Shalom

A. Knowing God Through His Son Brings Peace

1. Gideon was a regular guy with no very deep religious experience.
2. He had been tolerating the idolatry which had spread over all the country.
3. He had heard of 'Jehovah'
 - a) *He knew the traditions, which his fathers had told him.*
 - b) *That was all that he knew of the God of Israel.*
 - c) *Gideon had hearsay religion until he met God personally*
4. That is when Gideon heard those words—'Peace be unto thee; fear not, thou shalt not die.'
5. Dear friends, do you know anything of such an experience?
 - a) *Can you build your altar, and give it this same name?*
 - b) *Can you write upon the memorial of your experiences, 'The Lord is my peace'?*
 - c) *Have you passed from hearsay into personal contact?*
6. There is tranquility in trust. There is rest in submission.

B. This Peace Would Not Mean Absence of Conflict

1. Remember the purpose of this vision
2. Gideon was being called to fight the Midianites – he was going into battle
3. But he would have peace at the same time
4. Trust Christ as Savior and have peace but that does not mean a total absence of conflict
 - a) *The devil is still after us*
 - b) *We still have to battle the flesh*
 - c) *The world wants to drag us down*
5. The peace of God is the best preparation for strife.
 - a) *It gives courage*
 - b) *The Christian soldier described by Paul in Eph 6 is fully armed*

13) Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. **14)** Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness. **15)** And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; **16)** Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. **17)** And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

- c) *Part of that armor is peace*

C. The LORD Has Called and Commissioned Every Believer to Go Forth and Proclaim the Wonderful Message of Deliverance to the Lost of the World

1. Every believer is called to carry out this commission.
2. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matthew 28:19-20).
3. "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).
4. "Then said Jesus to them again, Peace *be* unto you: as *my* Father hath sent me, even so send I you" (John 20:21).

D. We Must Guard Against a Weak, Wavering Faith that Fears and Shrinks Back from God's Call

1. If a difficult situation arises, a situation that seems impossible to handle, we must take the problem to God and trust Him for wisdom.
2. If we ask God for wisdom, He promises to give us wisdom, to show us exactly how to handle the situation (James 1:5-6).
3. Contrary to the weak, wavering faith of Gideon, we must develop and grow a strong faith.
4. "Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, *shall he* not much more *clothe* you, O ye of little faith" (Matthew 6:30).
5. "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked" (Ephesians 6:16).