

Guidelines for the exercise of the Lord's day Prophesying Message Eight : The Intrinsic Significance of Gideon as God's Valiant Warrior

I. Overview :

We must see the intrinsic significance of Gideon's success; Gideon listened carefully to the word of God, and also obeyed God's word and acted on it. Gideon tore down the altar of Baal and cut down the Asherah; this touched God's heart. By tearing down the altar of Baal and cutting down the Asherah that belonged to his father, Gideon sacrificed his relationship with his father to follow Jehovah. Gideon received a reward; the economical Spirit came upon him to make him become powerful and with only three hundred men defeated two princes and two kings. The account of Gideon shows us how to be an overcomer; we must know the self, we realize ourselves to be the least, and those who left were fearful and afraid. The second selection was determined by how the people drank; those who drank directly with their mouth were eliminated by God and those who drank by bringing water in their hand to their mouth were selected by God. God gave Gideon three hundred men and made them one body, signified by a "round loaf of barley bread" tumbling through the camp of the Midianites for their defeat. We must see the intrinsic significance of the secret of Gideon's failure; he was not kind, he indulged in the lust of the flesh, and he coveted the spoil of his people.

II. Truth and Enlightenment:

Day 1 —

A. Expound the importance of seeing in spiritual things.

In spiritual things, seeing depends on hearing. The writer of Revelation first heard the voice and then saw the vision. If our ears are dull and cannot hear, then we cannot see. The Jews would not hear the word of the Lord, so they could not see what the Lord was doing according to the new testament. The Lord always wants to open our ears to hear His voice.

B. Explain the words in Hebrews 5:8.

The Lord's obedience was learned through suffering. True submission is found when there is still obedience in spite of suffering. A man's usefulness is not in whether he has suffered, but in whether he has learned obedience in it. Only those who are obedient to God are useful. If the heart is not softened, the suffering will not go away. Our way is the way of manifold sufferings. A man who yearns after ease and enjoyment is of no use. We must all learn to be obedient in sufferings.

Day 2 —

A. Expound the fourth factor of Gideon's success.

By tearing down the altar of Baal and cutting down the Asherah that belonged to his father, Gideon sacrificed his relationship with his father and his enjoyment of society. Because of what he had done, the men of the city of Ophrah contended with him and even wanted to kill him. For Gideon to do such a thing for God required that he sacrifice his own interests, and his sacrifice was a strong factor of his success.

B. Explain what the reward Gideon received.

As a result of these four factors, Gideon received a reward; the economical Spirit came upon him. Hence, he became powerful and with only three hundred men defeated two princes and two kings. With Gideon we have a picture of a man who lived in union with God, a God-man, to fulfill God's word and to carry out God's economy.

Day 3 —

A. Explain that entering into this victorious life, we must know the self thoroughly.

We must see that the self deserves only to die. Our end is God's beginning. We cannot receive the victory of Christ if we still have hope in our self. Christ is living in us, but we have not given Him the ground to rule over us and reign within us.

It is easy to be humble before God, but it is very difficult to be humble before man in comparison with others.

B. Expound that we need to offer up ourselves for the victorious life.

We need to offer up ourselves, even what we regard to be the least, to the hand of God. It does not matter whether we see ourselves as big or as small. If we do not put ourselves in the hand of God, both are equally futile.

All living sacrifices that are according to God's will are acceptable to God. The overcomers were called by God. Cast your treasure in the dust, and Jehovah will be your treasure.

Day 4 —

A. Expound the reason why God did not need so many people.

When Gideon blew the trumpet to call the people to fight against the Midianites, thirty-two thousand responded. God said that those who were with Gideon were too many for God to deliver Midian into their hand, for Israel might have vaunted himself against God, saying, "My own hand has saved me". By telling Gideon that he had too many people, God was indicating that He would fight for them.

B. Explain that the first selection resulted in many people leaving.

The first selection resulted in twenty-two thousand people leaving. They left because they wanted to glorify themselves. We are willing to give up our life but not to give up our glory. Not only do we have to overcome Satan, but we have to overcome ourselves. God wants only those who will work for Him without boasting about it. After working for God, we should merely say, "We are unprofitable slaves". Overcoming does not depend on the number of people but on knowing God.

Day 5 —

A. Explain the response of Gideon's hearing the account of a dream in the camp of Midian.

According to Judges 7:9 through 15, Gideon heard the account of a dream in the camp of Midian. One of the Midianites recounted a dream to his companion, who responded by saying that this was nothing else than the sword of Gideon and that God had delivered Midian and all the camp into Gideon's hand. When Gideon heard that he worshipped, returned to the camp of Israel, and said, "Arise, for Jehovah has delivered the camp of Midian into your hand".

B. Expound the significance of the barley loaf.

A barley loaf is a loaf of the resurrected Christ who can never be limited. God gave Gideon three hundred men and made them one body. Individual victory is not proper. Gideon and those three hundred men moved together and acted in one accord. All of their flesh was cut off, so they could be one. This is the oneness in the Spirit and a living in the Body.

Day 6 —

A. Expound the cause of Gideon's failure.

The secret of his failure comprises three factors. First, Gideon was not kind. He killed those countrymen who did not support him, breaking the sixth commandment of God. Second, he indulged in the lust of the flesh, not exercising any restriction over his fleshly lust. Third, although he did a good thing in refusing to rule over the people, he coveted the spoil of his people.

B. Explain what kind of warning for us on Gideon's failure has.

We have no right to divorce the Lord; we have no basis to forsake Him. We must take Him, love Him, honor Him, respect Him, regard Him, exalt Him, and cling to Him, rejecting Satan to the uttermost. Then we will be blessed. If we love the Lord and hate Satan, we will be blessed. Blessed is everyone—nation, society, group, and individual—whose Lord, Head, King, and Husband is Jehovah.

III. Conclusion:

In Gideon, we can learn how to be an overcomer. First, we must know the self. It is only in the light that self can be seen clearly. Apart from the Lord, I am nothing and I have nothing. Second, we must see the vision of God's eternal economy to know what God wants and what His purpose is. Third, we should present ourselves as living sacrifices to give Him the ground to rule over us and reign within us freely. Fourth, we should remove idols from our heart for the sake of Lord's testimony, let Him have the preeminent by the deprivation of various environments, and do not be afraid to fight for Him, take the initiative to stir up our spirit, declaring that the Spirit God has given us is strong. Fifth, be watchful in front of battle, and drink by bringing water in their hand to the mouth, indicating to be alert at all times when the enemy is concerned. Sixth, though we are tired, yet still chase the enemy, indicating that our labor is operating according to God's power.