

Hymns: 420 I Surrender All 461 O Zion Haste 455 Go Ye Into the World

Judges 6:1-40

¹ And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD: and the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years.² And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel: *and* because of the Midianites the children of Israel made them the dens which *are* in the mountains, and caves, and strong holds. ³ And *so* it was, when Israel had sown, that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east, even they came up against them; ⁴ And they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth, till thou come unto Gaza, and left no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass. ⁵ For they came up with their cattle and their tents, and they came as grasshoppers for multitude; *for* both they and their camels were without number: and they entered into the land to destroy it. ⁶ And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites; and the children of Israel cried unto the LORD. ⁷ And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD because of the Midianites, ⁸ That the LORD sent a prophet unto the children of Israel, which said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of bondage; ⁹ And I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all that oppressed you, and drave them out from before you, and gave you their land; ¹⁰ And I said unto you, I *am* the LORD your God; fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but ye have not obeyed my voice.

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

²⁵ And it came to pass the same night, that the LORD said unto him, Take thy father's young bullock, even the second bullock of seven years old, and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and cut down the grove that *is* by it: ²⁶ And build an altar unto the LORD thy God upon the top of this rock, in the ordered place, and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove which thou shalt cut down. ²⁷ Then Gideon took ten men of his servants, and did as the LORD had said unto him: and so it was, because he feared his father's household, and the men of the city, that he could not do *it* by day, that he did *it* by night. ²⁸ And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was cast down, and the grove was cut down that *was* by it, and the second bullock was offered upon the altar *that was* built. ²⁹ And they said one to another, Who hath done this thing? And when they enquired and asked, they said, Gideon the son of Joash hath done this thing. ³⁰ Then the men of the city said unto Joash, Bring out thy son, that he may die: because he hath cast down the altar of Baal, and because he hath cut down the grove that *was* by it. ³¹ And Joash said unto all that stood against him, Will ye plead for Baal? will ye save him? he that will plead for him, let him be put to death whilst *it is yet* morning: if he *be* a god, let him plead for himself, because *one* hath cast down his altar. ³² Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal, saying, Let Baal plead against him, because he hath thrown down his altar. ³³ Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the children of the east were gathered together, and went over, and pitched in the valley of Jezreel. ³⁴ But the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet; and Abiezer was gathered after him. ³⁵ And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh; who also was gathered after him: and he sent messengers unto Asher, and unto Zebulun, and unto Naphtali; and they came up to meet them.

³⁶ And Gideon said unto God, If thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said, ³⁷ Behold, I will put a fleece of wool in the floor; *and* if the dew be on the fleece only, and *it be* dry upon all the earth *beside*, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said. ³⁸ And it was so: for he rose up early on the morrow, and thrust the fleece together, and wringed the dew out of the fleece, a bowl full of water. ³⁹ And Gideon said unto God, Let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once: let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew. ⁴⁰ And God did so that night: for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground.

Gideon – Answering the Call of God

Judges 6:11-24, 36-40

“And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him (Gideon), and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour...And the LORD looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites...And the LORD said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.” (Judges 6:12, 14, 16)

5 practical points as a prayer in our study thus far:

- (1) Teach me Lord the evil of sin and the need for practical separation unto holiness.
- (2) Help me never make an intimate friend of anyone who is not a friend of God.
- (3) It is possible for me, though young, with known weaknesses, yet serve God, so help me, Lord!
- (4) Help me to determine in my heart as long as I live to make the Bible your guide and adviser.
- (5) It will do me good to have a spiritual mentor who will help nurse and nurture me in my Christian walk.

OUTLINE

- (1) When God Calls**
- (2) Responses to God's Call**
- (3) Characteristic of God's Call**
- (4) Submitting to God's Call**

INTRODUCTION

The scene opens before us once again with the death of God's appointed Judge, it was Deborah and they went awhoring again. The LORD chastise Israel for her waywardness.

Judges 6:1-3 "And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD: and the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years. 2 And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel: and because of the Midianites the children of Israel made them the dens which are in the mountains, and caves, and strong holds. 3 And so it was, when Israel had sown, that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east, even they came up against them."

Who were the Midianites mentioned in Judges 6:1?

The Midianites are the descendants of Abraham and Keturah (Genesis 25:1-4). The Midianites were desert people, their existence was nomadic. They were traders and caravaners (Genesis 37:25-36), some of them picked up Joseph it was their typical way of life, trading, traveling and troubling others. Moses joined the Midianite clan of Jethro after fleeing Egypt, but the Midianites did not join the Israelites in the conquest of Canaan. In the Balaam narrative the Midianites elders are allied with the Moabites and participate in the hiring of the prophet to curse Israel (Numbers 22:4). Relations between Israel and Midian further deteriorated after a Hebrew man married a Midianite woman (Numbers 25:6). This caused a plague which ceased only when the offenders were killed. Moses gave this account in Numbers 25:18 "For they vex you with their wives, wherewith they have beguiled you in the matter of Peor, and in the matter of Cozbi, the daughter of a prince of Midian, their sister, which was slain in the day of the plague for Peor's sake." The Lord further cursed Midian in Numbers 31. Israel slew every male and 5 kings (Numbers 31:7), only unmarried female were spared (Numbers 31:14-18). The scene opens with the Midianites oppressing Israel for 7 years. The Midianites came as far north as Moab according to Genesis 36:35. If Horeb is in Sinai, then they were South-West of Elath (Numbers 10:29). They were beyond the

Jordan in the vicinity of the plains of Moab in Numbers 25 and 31. They were even in the area South of Galilee in Cis-Jordan when Gideon routed them in Judges 6-8. (Adapted from "The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible", Volume 4, 220 & 222)

Why were the Israelites hiding in caves (Judges 6:2)? With few fortified cities, the Israelites' only protection was to hide out in the hills, where they could preserve their supplies and their families. In this region they are most likely to have used the caves from the Carmel range into the Iron Hills flanking the Valley of Jezreel on the southwest.

Invasion at harvest time (Judges 6:3). The timing of the raider was very important. If harvest time had passed, the villagers would have stored and hidden all of their grain and could withstand attack more easily. If the grain was still in the fields, the invader would have ample provisions and the villagers none. This would suggest April or May as the time of the invasions. The villages could easily be crippled if they were deprived of their year's supply of grain, so what the invaders did not use or steal, they destroyed. The trampling of the fields would jeopardize future seasons.

Who were the Amalekites? (Judges 6:3) The Amalekites were a confederation of tribes living primarily in the steppe area southeast of Canaan (Exodus 17). There may have also been groups of Amalekites in the hill country west of Samaria. They were always portrayed as Israel's rival for territory. The Amalekites wandered through vast stretches of land in the Negev, Transjordan and Sinai Peninsula. (Adapted from "The IVP Bible Background Commentary- Old Testament", 252-3)



⁶ And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites; and the children of Israel cried unto the LORD. ⁷ And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD because of the Midianites, ⁸ That the LORD sent a prophet unto the children of Israel, which said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of bondage; ⁹ And I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all that oppressed you, and drave them out from before you, and gave you their land; ¹⁰ And I said unto you, I *am* the LORD your God; fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but ye have not obeyed my voice.

It was Israel's sin that led to Israel's chastisement. God sent the Midianites to impoverish them. It was the anger of God's wrath upon them not to destroy them to jolt them to repentance.

Israel has repeatedly closed their ears to the warnings of God. Israel has become fearful of their enemies and their gods. They were exhorted to desist from fearing these dumb idols.

Psalm 115:4-8 (KJV) Their idols *are* silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat. They that make them are like unto them; *so is* every one that trusteth in them.

God will use one man to bring about revival in Israel.

(1) When God Calls (v11-12, 14)

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.

It was at the appointed time of Gideon's life that the LORD appeared to him for the work of delivering His people from the oppression of the Mideonites.

Notice God call him, God names His man and assured him of His presence - The LORD *is* with thee, thou mighty man of valour. The LORD addressed Gideon as "mighty man of valour". The LORD could see the potential and strength in a man.

Just as when the LORD called Moses to deliver Israel, He speaks of the great deliverance that He will do by the hand of His servant.

¹⁴ And the LORD looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?

Gideon as Moses, had to realize that it is God's power working in and through Him and will accomplished the glory of God. It was not him. When we look at ourselves and our weakness, certainly there is no human, logical reason for God to use an unworthy vessel. Yet, it is God's assessment that will make all the difference.

(2) Responses to God's Call (v13-15)

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. ¹⁴ And the LORD looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?

What was Gideon's response when God first called him?

- (a) He was fearful and doubtful (Judges 6: 13, 15), (b) slow to accept God's call (Judges 6:17) (c) and believe God's promise to equip him (Judges 6:12,14,16) (d) and lack of confidence to accept the service for the Lord (Judges 6: 37-40).

(a) From Fearful and Doubtful to Courageous and Bold (v13,15)

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....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.

Gideon was acquainted with God's working in the past, he was not ready to see that God will yet again proof Himself strong for His glory to deliver His people in their afflictions.

He was not able to see in the moment of spiritual weakness in the nation and His people that there is a way back to God when His people would repent from their sins, forsake their idols put Him first again.

2 Corinthians 6:14-18 (KJV) Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. **Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,** And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

2 Corinthians 7:1 (KJV) Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

God revived first the heart of His servant. God speaks to Gideon. God speaks to us today through His Word. When we take time to meditate upon His Word, the Spirit of God directs us to discern and align our hearts and life to His good will. As we take time to saturate ourselves in the meditation of God's Word, prayer and waiting upon Him, He speaks to us at His appointed time for action.

God will use Gideon in the battle against the idols that plague Israel by destroying them (v25-32).

²⁵ And it came to pass **the same night, that the LORD said unto him,** Take thy father's young bullock, even the second bullock of seven years old, and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and cut down the grove that *is* by it: ²⁶ And build an altar unto the LORD thy God upon the top of this rock, in the ordered place, and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove which thou shalt cut down. ²⁷ Then Gideon took ten men of his servants, and did as the LORD had said unto him: and so it was, because he feared his father's household, and the men of the

city, that he could not do *it* by day, that he did *it* by night. ²⁸ And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was cast down, and the grove was cut down that *was* by it, and the second bullock was offered upon the altar *that was* built. ²⁹ And they said one to another, Who hath done this thing? And when they enquired and asked, they said, Gideon the son of Joash hath done this thing. ³⁰ Then the men of the city said unto Joash, Bring out thy son, that he may die: because he hath cast down the altar of Baal, and because he hath cut down the grove that *was* by it. ³¹ And Joash said unto all that stood against him, Will ye plead for Baal? will ye save him? he that will plead for him, let him be put to death whilst *it is yet* morning: if he *be* a god, let him plead for himself, because *one* hath cast down his altar. ³² Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal, saying, Let Baal plead against him, because he hath thrown down his altar.

It was the beginning of the process of cleansing by the removal of the idols that disturbed Israel's peace.

(b) Slow to Accept God's Call (v17)

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.

Gideon did not simply, heartily accept God's call. He needed assurance from God to assure his heart that indeed, this is the will of God. Did not God already assure him of His presence to go with him to battle ... ¹² And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, **The LORD is with thee**, thou mighty man of valour.

True, the LORD did. Gideon himself needed time to bring the call into the very core of his being that indeed this is God's will for him.

(c) Believe God's promise to quip him (Judges 6:12,14,16)

¹² And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD *is* with thee, thou mighty man of valour... ¹⁴ And the LORD looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, 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.

God will assuredly equip Gideon for the work. He had to take God at His Word. Trust God's plan and power that will be manifested through him.

The LORD repeated his assurance, "surely I will be with thee"... What more do we need than the assurance of God's presence and power.

This is so in Christ's commandment to the church - **Matthew 28:18-20 (KJV)** And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 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 alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.

The servants of God are to go forth with God's assurance to accomplish His will to His glory.

(d) Lack of confidence to accept the service for the Lord (v37-40)

³⁶ And Gideon said unto God, If thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said, ³⁷ Behold, I will put a fleece of wool in the floor; *and* if the dew be on the fleece only, and *it be* dry upon all the earth *beside*, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said. ³⁸ And it was so: for he rose up early on the morrow, and thrust the fleece together, and wringed the dew out of the fleece, a bowl full of water. ³⁹ And Gideon said unto God, Let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once: let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew. ⁴⁰ And God did so that night: for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground.

Gideon needed assurance from the LORD that He will indeed accomplish His will through him. He asked for the LORD to show him two distinct signs by the miracles of the fleece.

(3) Characteristic of God's Call

What lessons can we learn from God's Call of Gideon?

(a) Believe that God makes no mistake when He calls (Judges 6:13, 15).

A parallel verse is 1 Corinthians 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." God does not make mistakes.

God called Gideon and commanded him to save Israel from the Midianites assuring him of victory!

(i) "And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, **The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour**" (Judges 6:12).

(ii) "And the LORD looked upon him, and said, **Go in this thy might**, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: **have not I sent thee?**" (Judges 6:14)

(iii) "And the LORD said unto him, **Surely I will be with thee**, and **thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.**" (Judges 6:16)

Gideon's response was fearful and doubtful. He posed four faithless questions to the angel of the LORD. The first and second question is out of doubt or unbelief and the third and four out fear and unbelief.

(i) "Oh my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us?" (Verse 13a)

(ii) "And where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?" (Verse 13b)

(iii) "But now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites." (Verse 13c)

(iv) 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. (Verse 15)

Gideon needed God's assurance when he was called. God called him personally (Judges 6:12, 14, 16). Gideon had to overcome his doubts and fears by faith, taking God at His Word.

(4) Submitting to God's Call

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. ... ³⁶ And Gideon said unto God, If thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said, ³⁷ Behold, **I will put a fleece of wool in the floor; and if the dew be on the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the earth beside**, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said. ³⁸ And it was so: for he rose up early on the morrow, and thrust the fleece together, and wringed the dew out of the fleece, a bowl full of water. ³⁹ And Gideon said unto God, Let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once: let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece; **let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew.** ⁴⁰ And God did so that night: for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground.

Gideon resisted God's call. Gideon was assured in his heart that God would use him after seeing three unmistakable confirmations of God's call (Judges 6:21, 38, 40). Gideon's faith was weak, he needed further assurance from God apart from His promises to him (verse 12, 14, 16).

Should we also do that? Well, looking back at my own experience, I must say that God is gracious and patient as He gradually prepared my heart to accept and wholehearted embrace His call and to act upon it.

In verse 17, the question posed by Gideon to God with "if", is a real condition meaning that if Gideon finds favour in God's sight, then God would truly fulfil Gideon's request for a sign.

This first class or real condition indicates the assumption of truth for the sake of argument. Gideon knew in his heart that God had called him, that God favoured him yet he still asks the question for the sake of testing God. Obviously, it will be fulfilled. When he saw the sign recorded in verse 21, it confirmed God's call.

(1) "...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." (Verse 21)

God was very patient to Gideon. By the use of "~ai", we know that Gideon already know the answer, it will be granted him yet he had to ask it. It stems from a weak faith. He later had to ask a second and third question to God, both of which also follows the real condition with the particle "~ai".

(2) Gideon prayed and waited for God's confirmation "**And Gideon said to God, Behold, I will put a fleece of wool in the floor; and if the dew be on the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the earth beside**, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said...And it was so: for he rose up early on the morrow, and thrust the fleece together, and wringed the dew out of the fleece, a bowl full of water." (Judges 6:36-37)

(3) Gideon prayed for a further confirmation of God's call "Let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once: let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew. And God did so that night: for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground."

(4) Experience God's Peace - Jehovah Shalom (Verse 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.

When Gideon saw the fire that rose of the rock to consume the offerings, all his resistance vanished, he paid homage to God and submitted himself to God's call.

You may then ask, why is it that in verse 36-40, Gideon had to ask God for another two signs?

My answer from the meditation of the passage is that Gideon had to mature in his faith, his faith in God is increasing gradually but certainly. There is work ahead for him to do. He cannot see it now, but God sees it, He had to take God at His Word and watch how God unfolds His plan for his life. Dear friends, isn't this exciting? Almighty God speaking with puny man to accomplish His will and purpose. Gideon had to learn not to look at himself but to look to God to accomplish his task. It is not accomplished by his own methods, but by God's way.

Matthew 9:35 (KJV) And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

Matthew 9:36 (KJV) But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.

Matthew 9:37-38 (KJV) Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly *is* plenteous, but the labourers *are* few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

Jesus utilized a farming imagery to help us to see the urgency of the work. When the farmer first sows, there is a season of cultivation, where he waters and fertilizes. But when harvest time comes, the entire field is ready at the same time.

Jesus urged His disciples to pray, for no man by himself can discharge this work unless the Lord raises him or her up and endows him with the strength and ability to go forth. There is a great number of people who needs instruction but there are few able to instruct these poor people in the ways of righteousness and truth. Pray the Lord by His Spirit would call and commission more to serve in this ripe harvest field.

CONCLUSION

If the Lord has called you to be trained so that you can be sent forth for this precious work of soul winning. May the Lord help you to prepare well. Amen.