

“God Is With Us”
Judges 6:11-16
(Preached at Trinity, February 22, 2015)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. In **Chapters 4-5** we read about the remarkable woman Deborah and the great deliverance God accomplished through her and Barak. After receiving the word from God Deborah told Barak, the commander of Israel's army to rise up and go to war against the armies of Jabin.
2. Israel went to war and Jabin's army was defeated and Sisera was killed. It was a great defeat. Jabin's force of chariots was decimated. As we saw, however, the focus of the battle was not actually upon Israel's army. It was upon God who rose up as a mighty warrior and crushed His enemy.
3. At the end of **Chapter 5** we once again find the familiar pattern.
 - (1) Israel entered a period of peace
Judges 5:31 NAU - "And the land was undisturbed for forty years."
 - (2) They again forgot God and fell into sin
Judges 6:1 NAU - "Then the sons of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD"
 - (3) God's condemnation fell upon them and He delivered them over to their enemies
Judges 6:1-2 NAU - "LORD gave them into the hands of Midian seven years. ² The power of Midian prevailed against Israel. "
The Midianites plagued Israel greatly. They were forced to hide in caves. Every time Israel planted a crop the Midianites would destroy it before they could harvest.
They destroyed their crops as well as all of their livestock.
 - (4) Then, once again, Israel cried out unto God.
Judges 6:6 NAU - " So Israel was brought very low because of Midian, and the sons of Israel cried to the LORD."
 - (5) God responds by sending a prophet to declare to them the reason for their suffering – **Verses 7-10**
Judges 6:10 NAU - "But you have not obeyed Me."
4. God then raises up a deliverer—the fifth in the series of God's judges. Thus far we've seen Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar and Deborah. This fifth judge is included in the list of major judges and is one of the most familiar of the judges. His name is Gideon. The Gideon narrative spans three chapters.
5. As we are introduced to Gideon we find this poor soul hiding away in a wine press trying to process his wheat, hopefully obscured from the eyes of the Midianites. To Gideon God sends forth the “Angel of the LORD.”

6. Some expositors hold that many of these visitations of the “Angel of the LORD” are actually pre-incarnate appearances of Jesus Christ or at least manifestations of God Himself in the form of a theophany. I too hold to this position. We also saw this in **Chapter 2**
Judges 2:1 NAU - "Now the angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim. And he said, "I brought you up out of Egypt and led you into the land which I have sworn to your fathers; and I said, 'I will never break My covenant with you'"
 Andrew Fausett wrote: “The Angel of the LORD identifies himself with Jehovah in His words and deeds as no prophet does.”
 Arthur Cundall wrote: “The angel of the Lord is regularly used in the Old Testament to denote the manifestation of the Lord himself in a theophany.
7. As we meet Gideon we hardly see a man of great strength. He was more like a frightened little child. This is why the angel’s description of him is so unexpected, both to us and to Gideon:
Judges 6:12 NAU - "The LORD is with you, O valiant warrior."
Judges 6:12 KJV - "The LORD *is* with thee, thou mighty man of valour"
8. Gideon’s immediate contention was not with being called a valiant warrior but with the declaration, “The LORD is with you.”
 Gideon basically says in **Verse 13**, “What! If God is with us why has all of this happened? Why am I sitting here in hiding trying to thresh enough wheat to survive?”
 “God is not with us, He has abandoned us!”
9. The truth is, however, God WAS with Gideon and His people.
 Tonight I want us to consider this glorious truth. God is with us. I want to remind you of four things to remember:
- I. God’s presence is a peaceful solace
 - A. The world of Gideon seemed to be coming apart
 1. Their very existence was threatened. Their ability to feed themselves was challenged.
 2. Gideon was barely able to thresh enough wheat to survive. It seemed hopeless.
 3. In such circumstances it would be hard to imagine that God was nearby. God reminds Gideon that He is present in every situation.
 - B. Nowhere are we assured that this life will be free from adversity
 1. We dwell in a fallen world filled with many dangers. There are what we refer to as natural disasters – tornados, hurricanes, earthquakes, floods
 2. There is always the threat of harm from sinful men who are capable of unimaginable wickedness.
 3. Sometimes we suffer under the folly of our own sinfulness
 - C. God’s promise is that He is with us
 1. He is with you through every trial. While they may come unexpectedly for us they are not unexpected for Him

2. David continually marveled at God's abiding presence. It was his greatest source of comfort.
Psalms 139:1-10 NAU - " O LORD, You have searched me and known *me*. ² You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thought from afar. ³ You scrutinize my path and my lying down, And are intimately acquainted with all my ways. ⁴ Even before there is a word on my tongue, Behold, O LORD, You know it all. ⁵ You have enclosed me behind and before, And laid Your hand upon me. ⁶ *Such* knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is *too* high, I cannot attain to it. ⁷ Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? ⁸ If I ascend to heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there. ⁹ If I take the wings of the dawn, If I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, ¹⁰ Even there Your hand will lead me, And Your right hand will lay hold of me."
3. God's presence brings us perfect peace in a world of conflict
Philippians 4:6-7 NAU - " Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."
 By "heart and mind" Paul is referring to our soul – our spirit
Psalms 54:4 NAU - "Behold, God is my helper; The Lord is the sustainer of my soul."
Psalms 16:11 NAU - "You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever."
4. God's abiding presence is a never ending confidence. God tells us, "I will be with you."

II. God's presence is a solemn fear

- A. Gideon's words in **Verses 22-23** seem strange to the modern ear:
Judges 6:22-23 NAU - "When Gideon saw that he was the angel of the LORD, he said, "Alas, O Lord GOD! For now I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face." ²³ The LORD said to him, "Peace to you, do not fear; you shall not die."
 1. Gideon presumed that having gazed upon the living God he would die
 2. This was a common response
Isaiah 6:5 NAU - "Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I live among a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts."
 3. Most today would try to calm Gideon, explaining that it's OK—God is loving and merciful and there is no need to fear. They believe approaching God is an inalienable right. Few today have an adequate understanding of the awesome nature of the divine essence of God.

- a. We saw in Daniel the right proper way to approach God
Daniel 9:4 NAU - "Alas, O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments,"
 - b. The word for awesome means "fear." A right understanding of God produces an unbelievable sense of awe.
 - B. God's presence is glorious, but also fearful
 - 1. God's presence is abiding and intimate but never common. God presence is one of infinite holiness.
 - 2. The writer of Hebrews reminds us,
Hebrews 12:28-29 NAU - "Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; ²⁹ for our God is a consuming fire."
- III. God's presence is a bold confidence
- A. In the face of our weakness God is with us.
 - 1. This was God's word to the resistance of Moses
Exodus 3:11-12 NAU - "But Moses said to God, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?" ¹² And He said, "Certainly I will be with you, and this shall be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain."
 - 2. Moses learned that God's presence was absolutely essential. He learned to pray for God's abiding presence.
Exodus 33:15-16 NAU - "If Your presence does not go *with us*, do not lead us up from here. ¹⁶ "For how then can it be known that I have found favor in Your sight, I and Your people? Is it not by Your going with us, so that we, I and Your people, may be distinguished from all the *other* people who are upon the face of the earth?"
 - 3. This was also God's word to Joshua
Joshua 1:5 NAU - "No man will *be able to* stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you."
 - 4. And this is God's word in the face of Gideon's resistance
Judges 6:15-16 NAU - "O Lord, how shall I deliver Israel? Behold, my family is the least in Manasseh, and I am the youngest in my father's house." ¹⁶ But the LORD said to him, "Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat Midian as one man."
 - B. In essence God is saying, "Of course you are weak. But I am Almighty. You need me so I am with you."
 - 1. Jesus tells us:
John 15:5 NAU - "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing."

2. Paul experienced God's power in his weakness
2 Corinthians 12:7-9 NAU - "Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me-- to keep me from exalting myself! ⁸ Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. ⁹ And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me."
3. What are you going through? Do you feel overwhelmed? Is it because you are trying to go it alone? Is it because you have forgotten God is with you?
4. He will always be sufficient for you:
Hebrews 13:5 NAU - "*Make sure that* your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,"

IV. God's presence is a condescending mercy

- A. Sin resulted in an infinite distance between God and sinful men
Isaiah 59:2 NAU - "But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, And your sins have hidden *His* face from you so that He does not hear."
1. The Israelites deserved every affliction and hardship they were experiencing.
Judges 6:1 NAU - "When the sons of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD gave them into the hands of Midian seven years."
2. Humanity should be destroyed, and yet God continues to show compassion. He is very present in His creation. Nothing escapes His eye and nothing is outside His sovereign direction.
3. This does not mean God has turned away from His wrath. It means He is merciful and patient. Judgment is coming but in His forbearance He is commanding men to repent.
4. God's goodness upon the wicked is a temporary mercy
- B. The redeemed, however, enjoy God's covenant presence
 1. He loves us those who are in Christ. It is an endless love. It is a redeeming love.
Psalms 103:10-13 NAU - " He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. ¹¹ For as high as the heavens are above the earth, So great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him. ¹² As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us. ¹³ Just as a father has compassion on *his* children, So the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him."

2. God is with us. We have His divine favor. If God is with us what else really matters? It puts each day in the light of His countenance?
Psalms 4:6-8 NAU - " ⁷ You have put gladness in my heart, More than when their grain and new wine abound. ⁸ In peace I will both lie down and sleep, For You alone, O LORD, make me to dwell in safety."
Psalms 89:15-17 NAU - "How blessed are the people who know the joyful sound! O LORD, they walk in the light of Your countenance. ¹⁶ In Your name they rejoice all the day, And by Your righteousness they are exalted. ¹⁷ For You are the glory of their strength, And by Your favor our horn is exalted."

Conclusion:

1. The greatest thing about this passage is it is God speaking. This isn't the wishful expression of a man—that God is with us. This is God speaking and He uses the emphatic:
Judges 6:16 NAU - "But the LORD said to him, "Surely I will be with you"
2. This is our confidence. Nothing shall separate us from God. Nothing will remove His favor from us. We are His children; His beloved. He is with us. Gideon didn't recognize that His outward circumstance did not affect this. Often the worst of affliction reflects God's great love for us.
3. Moses' final sermon to Israel:
Deuteronomy 31:3 NAU - "It is the LORD your God who will cross ahead of you; He will destroy these nations before you, and you shall dispossess them. Joshua is the one who will cross ahead of you, just as the LORD has spoken."
Deuteronomy 31:6 NAU - "Be strong and courageous, do not be afraid or tremble at them, for the LORD your God is the one who goes with you. He will not fail you or forsake you."
4. Solomon spoke at the Temple dedication:
1 Kings 8:56-57 NAU - "Blessed be the LORD, who has given rest to His people Israel, according to all that He promised; not one word has failed of all His good promise, which He promised through Moses His servant. ⁵⁷ "May the LORD our God be with us, as He was with our fathers; may He not leave us or forsake us"
5. And our Lord's words to us:
Matthew 28:20 NAU - "lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."