



Sunday Service

Sunday 24th January 2021
The Third Sunday after Epiphany

Enduring Hope (2)
Trust versus self-doubt - Gideon
Judges 6 : 11 - 29, 36 - 40

Opening Prayer

God of all mercy, your Son Jesus announced Good News to all: release us from our sins and grant us eternal life, not by our achievements or success, but by faith in you. Anoint us with your Holy Spirit and set all your children free to praise you with joy and hope in Jesus' Name. Amen.

Bible reading

¹¹The angel of the LORD came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites. ¹²When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said, 'The LORD is with you, mighty warrior.'

¹³'Pardon me, my lord,' Gideon replied, 'but if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our ancestors told us about when they said, "Did not the LORD bring us up out of Egypt?" But now the LORD has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midian.'

¹⁴The LORD turned to him and said, 'Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand. Am I not sending you?' ¹⁵'Pardon me, my lord,' Gideon replied, 'but how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family.'

¹⁶The LORD answered, 'I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites, leaving none alive.'

¹⁷Gideon replied, 'If now I have found favour in your eyes, give me a sign that it is really you talking to me. ¹⁸Please do not go away until I come back and bring my offering and set it before you.'

And the LORD said, 'I will wait until you return.'

¹⁹Gideon went inside, prepared a young goat, and from an ephah of flour he made bread without yeast. Putting the meat in a basket and its broth in a pot, he brought them out and offered them to him under the oak.

²⁰The angel of God said to him, 'Take the meat and the unleavened bread, place them on this rock, and pour out the broth.' And Gideon did so. ²¹Then the angel of the LORD touched the meat and the unleavened bread with the tip of the staff that was in his hand. Fire flared from the rock, consuming the meat and the bread. And the angel of the LORD disappeared. ²²When Gideon realised that it was the angel of the LORD, he exclaimed, 'Alas, Sovereign LORD! I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face!'

²³But the LORD said to him, 'Peace! Do not be afraid. You are not going to die.'

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

²⁵That same night the LORD said to him, 'Take the second bull from your father's herd, the one seven years old. Tear down your father's altar to Baal and cut down the Asherah pole that you cut down, offer the second bull as a burnt offering.'

²⁷So Gideon took ten of his servants and did as the LORD told him. But because he was afraid of his family and the townspeople, he did it at night rather than in the daytime.

²⁸In the morning when the people of the town got up, there was Baal's altar, demolished, with the Asherah pole beside it cut down and the second bull sacrificed on the newly-built altar!

²⁹They asked each other, 'Who did this?' When they carefully investigated, they were told, 'Gideon son of Joash did it.'

³⁶Gideon said to God, 'If you will save Israel by my hand as you have promised – ³⁷look, I will place a wool fleece on the threshing-floor. If there is dew only on the fleece and all the ground is dry, then I will know that you will save Israel by my hand, as you said.' ³⁸And that is what happened. Gideon rose early the next day; he squeezed the fleece and wrung out the dew – a bowlful of water.

³⁹Then Gideon said to God, 'Do not be angry with me. Let me make just one more request. Allow me one more test with the fleece, but this time make the fleece dry and let the ground be covered with dew.' ⁴⁰That night God did so. Only the fleece was dry; all the ground was covered with dew.

Talk : Enduring Hope (2) : Trust versus self-doubt - Gideon

- Why can we have hope when all seems hopeless?
- Introduction to Gideon and the historical context.
- Recognise the reality (v 11)
- Hear God's call (v 12 – 14, 16)
- Recognise our doubts (v 15)
- Where do we seek reassurance from?
 - Gideon : Tests of God (v 17, 23, 36 – 40)
 - Us : God's fulfilled Promises and Faithfulness
His Word and Holy Spirit
- Trust in God's Ways not our own feelings about our abilities (v 24 – 29)
- The rest of Gideon's story

“The LORD answered, ‘I will be with you,...’ Judges 6 : 16a

A prayer for all those affected by coronavirus

Keep us good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy.

Sustain and support the anxious, be with all those who care for the sick,
and lift up all who are brought low;

that we may find comfort knowing nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Final Prayer

Almighty God, you have revealed your saving presence throughout all ages; renew us now with your heavenly grace, that in all our times of doubt we might trust in you, and you alone.

For the glory of Jesus, our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

Blessing

May Christ the Son of God strengthen our faith, and lift our hearts to endure with hope until His return.

And may the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us now and for ever more. Amen.