

Forged

14 - God's Covert Agents
Church on the Park | Sunday, 21 August 2016

Texts: Zech. 9:13; Isaiah 49:1-4; Judges 7:20

Theme: You are God's weapon and like a blacksmith he's forging you to make you sharp and strong.

Intro: The story of Gideon is about the Lord forging Gideon into his weapon. This did not happen instantaneously but through a deep, back and forth process. In the end of God's forging process, Gideon and his remnant army, throw off Midian's oppression and free Israel. God also wants to forge you into his sword. He has called you, but he desires to take you further and make you his chosen weapon. Today, we continue on this theme of 'ARISE,' and we are focusing on the last word of this acronym: Equip. We're exploring *how God equips you*.

1) You are God's weapon—not an organisation, institution or religion—but you, in Jesus (Zech. 9:13; Isaiah 49:1-4).

- There's a well known **phrase** that was cried when Gideon's army attacked the Midianites: "The **sword** of the **Lord** and of **Gideon**!" (Judges 7:20, KJV & NKJV).
 - First, it may **seem** like **arrogance** to put the sword of the Lord and Gideon in the same phrase.
 - Naturally speaking, it's quite **ironic** because Gideon's army had **no swords**.
 - God used a very **unusual way** to destroy Midian.
 - The only '**weapons**' Gideon had were **trumpets, empty jars** and **torches**. When Gideon and his company blew the trumpets and smashed the jars, the **Midianites** began to **fight** and **kill each other**.
 - God used their **enemies' own sword** to kill himself.
 - He still does the **same** thing today. The Lord uses the **attacks** of the **devil** to **sabotage** the **devil himself**.
 - All the pressure and stress the enemy causes us, only transforms our grapes into wine and our olive into oil.
 - ***Isaiah 54:15-17*** - "**No weapon** formed against you"
 - Again, **you are God's weapon**. It's not an organisation or institution. It's not a religion that the Lord chooses. It's you—you in Jesus—that's **God's weapon of choice**.
 - You are **God's trumpet**. You are **God's empty jars** in which his fire burns.
 - Why say, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!"? **Gideon let God** work in his life to such an extent that **God's sword was Gideon's sword**.
 - The **Lord's word** was **Gideon's word**. They became **one** because Gideon allowed God to **hew, press** and **winnow** him.
 - Remember Paul said, "**My Gospel**" (Rom. 2:16, 16:25).
 - Remember that Paul also talked about the '**sword of the Spirit**.' That sword of the Spirit needs to become **your own sword**.
 - "Jesus I know and Paul I know, *but who are you?*" Not merely **in name**, but in **actuality**.
 - *Acts 19:15ff

2) Like a blacksmith, the Lord is forging you into his weapon (Zech. 9:13)

- Think about a **cluster of grapes**. They only cost a **few dollars**. But if they go through the process of the **winepress** and the wine is allowed to **mature**, those grapes that once cost a **few dollars** could cost **hundreds** or **thousands** of dollars.
- You are **worth** something to God, and yet as you go through God's **press** and **process**, you become even **more valuable**.
 - **Jesus** was always **valuable** to God, but he also "**grew in wisdom** and stature, in the **favour** of **God** and man."

- The Lord **finds you** as a **hunk of metal** and says, “**This is my weapon.**”
 - But of course, **it’s not made yet.** (copper, bronze, gold, iron or steel could be used)
- Here’s the **process** of a **blacksmith**
 - First, he has the **design** in mind—the **dream**
 - Second, he **finds** the **right metal**
 - Third, he **cuts** the metal into the **right size.**
 - Fourth, he **forges** the **blade** in the **fire** and with a **hammer.**
 - This is a **back and forth process** of going into the fire then on to the anvil to be hammered.
 - **PATIENCE & PERSEVERANCE** is key
 - Now, think of **Gideon’s story** at this point.
 - **Gideon** was someone who went through the **forge’s fire.** First, there was **32,000.** Then God pressed them down to **10,000.** Then the finally cut was **300.**
 - **Three hundred men** that are totally devoted to God in **faith** and **self-discipline** are **more valuable than thousands.**
 - It is this **cutting, shaping and forging work** which is the **hardest thing** for us believers to understand.
 - ***Why? Because the Bible promises blessing for the righteous and this process does not feel like the peace he promised!*
 - Fifth, he **hardens** the blade.
 - Now this is the most **counterintuitive process** of all, and yet the **most crucial.**
 - The blacksmith **quenches** the metal often in **warm oil** making it **brittle** and then he **tempers** the blade to make it **strong.** (After quenching he descales.)
 - This brings a **rapid decrease** in heat and temperature.
 - I feel that a **few** of this are in **this stage** of being **quenched** and **tempered.**
 - This is hardest on **the ego** and we think that **God** has **left us** or our **church.**
 - Sixth, he **finalises** the blade to give it a **mirror effect.**
 - This involves **buffering, polishing** and **sharpening.**

3) The Father wants to give you sharp eyes and ears (Judges 7:4-8).

- What was the **final refining** of Gideon’s army all about?
- Here the Lord takes them to **water** to test them
 - God **tested** them **through water.**
 - In Scripture, God often uses water as a test. Moses failed a test regarding water and was kept out of the Promised Land. God’s first test of Israel in the wilderness was with water.
- Some commentators say that it was just **random** that God picked the ones that lapped like a dog with their hands. **I don’t** think so.
- This part of the story always made **sense** to me because my **dad** taught me how to drink like a **soldier.** He was in the special forces.
 - I would put my whole head under the faucet. He told me that in the army he learned to **cup the water** with his hands and bring it up to his mouth.
- This type of drinking took **self-discipline.** And it meant the soldier was **watchful and trained.**
 - Jesus taught us to ‘**watch and pray,**’ which meant to be **alert.**
- Here we learn it’s not **what** you do—drink water—but **how** you do it. *How do you drink the water?*
 - Some **drink in the Spirit & Word** in a **self-absorbed way** and some in a **self-disciplined** way. Some drink for the battle and others drink for self-indulgence.
 - God tests you through the water of his Word—through Scripture devotion and preaching.
- God’s soldiers need **sharp eyes and ears.**
 - First, **sharp ears** to hear and **obey** his **directions.** We see this with Gideon listening to the Lord every step of the hewing process.
 - Second, **sharp eyes.**
 - Not **eyes stuck** in the **water**, but eyes that **look out and up—watchful eyes.**
 - This is only happens through **discipline** and **training.** This is not the normal way—it’s the odd way. Only **3%** are like this.

Conclusion: Embrace God's forging work in your life so that you can be like Gideon, bringing freedom to others.

END NOTES

Misc

Moreover, God wants to make you into his sword. You become God's weapon. Look at *Zechariah 9:13: "And I will make you like a warrior's sword."

God's sword is a spiritual sword. When the Word of God becomes a part of you, becomes who you are, then you become God's sword, his weapon.

I feel like I'm in that movie "Once upon a Time." All the things I speak about on Sunday are things God has worked in my life. But, that work surely isn't finished, and the very things I preach about come to pass in my life that week. This week I felt tremendous pressure, so much that I could not sleep all night on Thursday. I stayed up and wrestled with God—praying and seeking his Word.

One time I spoke about remove the stone. That week I passed a kidney stone. Funny thing is I don't know how the word of the Lord will come to pass in my life. It's usually in a very unexpected way. God makes his messengers his message.

I need to trust that I am in good hands with the Father.

How did the last pressing taking place?

God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, of love and of self-discipline.

Last I want to talk about the trumpet. Watchmen and leaders have trumpets.