

## **2022 New Years Prayers evaluation and vision?**

### **God's character:**

- The general points made related to faith, trust, courage and love
- God is so patient. Time and again he reassured Gideon. He also showed His faithfulness to His chosen people but first their sin needed to be dealt with.
- God is patient, persistent, faithful and powerful
- God will not ask us to do something which is outside our capability we can rely on the fact that if He asks us to do something He will be there in it with us.
- God sees the potential in each one of us and wants to bring it out
- God is powerful
- But God chooses to work with us flawed people, while he can achieve what he wants without us (or Gideon), he chooses to work with Gideon and Gideon had to choose to work with God

### **God's leading in the past:**

- There was also sharing of past and present experiences when we had felt God's guidance, eg in discerning whether to take on new job

### **Israel's relationship with God**

- The Israelites lost the respect of the neighbouring nations when they stopped worshipping God. We need to be in the world but not of the world.

### **Gideon's character / attitude**

- Gideon's faith was weak but at least he had some faith and Father God graciously and patiently took that and grew it.
- In respect of the barley bread this was rough bread only eaten by the poor but the Lord could take something so lowly and use it for his purposes.
- Gideon still had fear because he took his servant with him into the enemy camp. Hearing the dream discussed and knowing that God would fulfil his promises filled Gideon with faith, assurance and worship.
- Although there are signs of Gideon's nervousness (building an altar at night; asking for signs with the fleece), there are also signs of his confidence in God – he was prepared to die should Baal prove victorious. He was obedient.
- The signs of the fleece could be seen as checking in with God that he was still in line with God's will and purpose and that he hadn't moved off at a tangent. He wanted to ensure he was going in the right direction.
- Gideon seeks God's reassurance more than any other biblical character we could think of. God didn't chastise him for that but rather honoured him by giving him the reassurance he needed.

- Our own insecurities and lack of confidence often hold us back from stepping out. We need to remember that we have been chosen by God and honour our calling to be His vessels.
- Hearing the dream discussed and knowing that God would fulfil his promises filled Gideon with faith, assurance and worship. his encouragement spread to his army which was outnumbered 450 to 1.

### **Our attitude**

- We are asked to surrender to God, like Gideon was asked to surrender to God
- It is difficult to discern God's will for us – Gideon had problems with that too!
- But idols will have to go In order for us to help God do a new thing in the City, God needs to pre-eminent in our lives (individually / church life)
- I was reminded of the picture I had, earlier in the day, of us being surrounded by a hedge, but that we only have to take down a small bit of the hedge in order to go through.
  - Mark then said that we feel safe behind our hedge!
- It is difficult to escape the hedge as we feel vulnerable outside of the hedge.
- But we are not vulnerable as God is always with us.

### **New vision needed**

Current new initiatives:

- Littlebourne
- Prayer Ministry

### Story about walking Whitefriars shopping centre

- Even though people did not come from there to the carol service and the recites, I felt God nudging me that this is where people are that he loves
- The people who work in the shops, cleaning and admin
- East Kent Synod Area: Kent Workplace Mission
  - Do chaplaincy to Bluewater (among other businesses)
- Our church was moved and build because of Whitefriars
- It is on our doorstep

### Prayer yesterday

- Reading Judges 7:9-15
- v10: If you fear to attack – go down to the camp... and listen to them (hear what they have to say) and then your hands will be strengthened
- Whitefriars chaplaincy is: Go down and hear what they have to say
- Listening to people.
- We can all do that: whatever our age or ability
- We can pray for them – we are good at praying!
- It is a small step!
  - Literally: it is the near to us
  - Also, not much effort: walk around and speak to people

- Is this what God is asking us to do as a church?
  - OASIS Café fits into that – people may come there
  - Opening the church Wednesday lunch times fits into that – welcoming them into our home, and providing hospitality

Hearing what they have to say

- Getting to know them and their situation
- God will then give us opportunities to share our story: the Gospel of Jesus Christ
  - As your story is interwoven in God's story
  - God may answer prayers for healing, restoration of businesses as well as people
  - We know they need this after Corona
- Their hands will be strengthened
  - We get to know them and therefore we know how God wants us to approach them
  - So that the Gospel can be preached
- A small step to a wider vision?

Shall we pray about that?