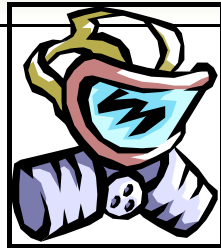


“The Mask of Unforgiveness”

By Mrs. Sojourner



The scriptures tell us that the Lord knows the secrets of our hearts. Scripture also makes it clear that the Lord wants us to walk in forgiveness.

Unfortunately many people choose to wear masks over their unforgiveness. These people think they are wearing painted masks that show a happy faces. They are, in reality, wearing gas masks. “Gas masks?” you may ask. Yes, gas masks. These unfortunate people, think they are just hiding their unforgiveness from everyone, maybe even themselves. They are in reality, holding the poisons of unforgiveness inside their gas masks instead of keeping poisons out. Their masks end up keeping them stewing in unforgiveness’s poisons instead of giving them relief.

What can be done to help these people? They themselves must give up their unforgiveness. You see, our Heavenly Father forgave us of our sins.

12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be

partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: 13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: 14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins Col. 1:12-14 (NIV)

Foot-
notes:

If he can forgive us, how can we not forgive?

1 Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD . . . 3 If you, O LORD, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand? 4 But with you there is forgiveness. . . 5 I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I put my hope. Psalm 130:1-5 (NIV)

We must put our hope in His forgiveness, remove the gas masks and breathe/receive the fresh air of God’s loving forgiveness.

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...with The Sojourner

“The Strength You Have” (Teaching Sketch)

Judges 6:11-14 (NIV)



God’s ways are not our ways, as we know from our study of scripture. We have seen that here in the Book of Judges, as Israel^[a] cried out to God he sent them a prophet. Remember a prophet is someone who speaks to man for God. The prophet delivers God’s words on God’s behalf. As we have discussed earlier in this study of Judges 6 the Israelites were no doubt perplexed by the appearance of a prophet rather than a legion of warring angels or a well placed plague or two.

An Angel

Now, we see God doing yet another thing which would not have been expected. An angel appears, suddenly and unexpectedly, to a man hiding from the enemy. The man’s name is Gideon and he is attempting to get by, as he hides, making flour for bread so he can eat.

How many believers today, like Gideon, are oppressed by brawling contentious ones

and are missing in action. How many believers are hiding, attempting to eek out an existence while not engaging the enemy?

Notes:

[a]
Those who prevail with God

Mighty Warrior

It must have been a shock, not only to have an angel appear in his presence, but to also have been greeted with the words, “The LORD is with you, mighty warrior.”

It is important to note here that God does not always see a person the way they see themselves. The reason for this is, God knows who we are in his kingdom much better than we may understand who we are in his kingdom.

Why?

It is at this point we find Gideon asking a question that seems to be prevalent in the minds of many people. This is especially true when a person is feeling adversity or things are not transpiring the way we wish they would.

Gideon’s question, “If the

Please note: This is a teaching sketch only and not the complete teaching.

Scripture:

Judges 6:11-14 (NIV)

11 The angel of the LORD came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah^[a] that belonged to Joash^[b] the Abiezrite^[c], where his son Gideon^[d] was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites. 12 When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said, "The LORD is with you, mighty warrior." 13 "But sir," Gideon replied, "if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our fathers told us about when they said, 'Did not the LORD bring us up out of Egypt^[e]?' But now the LORD has abandoned us and put us into the hand of Midian." 14 The 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?"

Notes:

- [a] Fawn
- [b] Jehovah
- [c] Fired
- [d] Father of Help
- [e] Feller; ie. Warrior
- [e] Egypt represents bondage

“The Strength You Have” (Teaching Sketch)

Judges 6:11-14 (NIV)

LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us?” Now there is a question many believers may have asked. Gideon, however, does not stop there. He wants to know where are all the wonders of the past we have been told about by past generations. “Did not the LORD bring us up out of Egypt?” Gideon asks. He goes on to wonder if they had not been abandoned by God and placed at the mercy of their oppressors.

How often, I wonder, do people do evil in the sight of the Lord, and then complain to God because they are reaping what they have sown, somehow blaming God?

Save Who Prevails With God

The LORD ignores what Gideon speaks of and simply instructs him to, “Go in the strength you have, and save Israel out of Midian’s hand. Am I not sending you?”

Believers, have we not been sent by the LORD to do the same—to set captives free, heal the sick, bind up the broken hearted, in short to bring salvation. Go in the strength you have!

Notes:

Israel & Israelites — Those who prevail with God

Midian & Midianites — Brawling contentious ones

Amalekites — a misery wicked workman (The Israelites had to pass through their territory in Arabia to reach Canaan .)

Gaza — *strong, vehement, harsh:*— fierce, + greedy, mighty, power, roughly, strong.

[Amorite — to challenge with words.]