

SERMON

Australia – February 2018

USA – June 2019

A matter of optics.

Someone once said: "*When you see a giant, examine the position of the sun before; It's not going to be the shadow of a pygmy.*"

[Friederich L. Freiherr von Hardenberg](#)

According to the "Wikipedia": *The **Perception** It is the way in which the brain of an organism interprets the sensory stimuli it receives through the senses to form a conscious impression of the physical reality of its environment.¹ It also describes the set of mental processes by which a person selects, organizes and interprets information from stimuli, thoughts and feelings, from his previous experience, in a logical or meaningful way.²*

When we talk about perception we are talking about "interpretation" of reality. In other words, the way we process the information we receive and give it a meaning. The perception is REAL for the one who perceives it, because it is their experience, but for that same reason, the

¹ https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Percepci%C3%B3n#cite_note-1

² https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Percepci%C3%B3n#cite_note-2

perception is neither general nor universal, because the way in which each processes the reality can be different. There are many factors that can condition a perception (diseases, disability, circumstances, culture, beliefs, etc.). Therefore, perception and reality are not necessarily the same.

So the way we perceive things conditions the way we relate to them. Forms are not realities but perceptions of reality.

In the specific case of our "*Pygmy Giant*", we see three ways to confront reality.

In the first one we see the "giant" and we feel fear. We feel powerless to cope. We are frightened and we lose all hope in ourselves.

The second we see the "Pygmy" with airs of grandeur. We are insignificant and we believe the shadow fantasy. We think we can do everything. But it's just an illusion.

The third look at the sun that helps us to see the truth of the shadows and also who we really are. This is the case, not when we look at the "sun" as an illustration, but God, the creator of the Sun, who helps us perceive who we are and how to confront what surrounds us

The only one who understands, understands, reality as it is, is God himself. And it is the only one that can help us to understand the world around us and ourselves.

The Holy Scriptures are full of examples of different perceptions of reality and how God corrects the optics of humans.

One of those examples was Gideon.

Reading Judges 6:11-24:

Judges 6.11–24 (NASB95)

Gideon Is Visited

¹¹Then the angel of the LORD came and sat under the oak that was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite as his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the wine press in order to save it from the Midianites.

¹²The angel of the LORD appeared to him and said to him, “The LORD is with you, O valiant warrior.”

¹³Then Gideon said to him, “O my lord, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about, saying, ‘Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?’ But now the LORD has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midian.”

¹⁴The LORD looked at him and said, “Go in this your strength and deliver Israel from the hand of Midian. Have I not sent you?”

¹⁵He said to Him, “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.”

¹⁶But the LORD said to him, “Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat Midian as one man.”

¹⁷So Gideon said to Him, “If now I have found favor in Your sight, then show me a sign that it is You who speak with me.

¹⁸ “Please do not depart from here, until I come back to You, and bring out my offering and lay it before You.” And He said, “I will remain until you return.”

¹⁹Then Gideon went in and prepared a young goat and unleavened bread from an ephah of flour; he put the meat in a basket and the broth in a pot, and brought them out to him under the oak and presented them.

²⁰The angel of God said to him, “Take the meat and the unleavened bread and lay them on this rock, and pour out the broth.” And he did so.

²¹Then the angel of the LORD put out the end of the staff that was in his hand and touched the meat and the unleavened bread; and fire sprang up from the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread. Then the angel of the LORD vanished from his sight.

²²When 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.”

²³The LORD said to him, “Peace to you, do not fear; you shall not die.”

²⁴Then Gideon built an altar there to the LORD and named it The LORD is Peace. To this day it is still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

When the angel of the Lord appeared to him and said, "*The Lord is with you, hard-working, courageous man...*" Gideon answered him again: "*Oh, my lord, what will I save Israel with?*" Behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the youngest in my father's house. Judges 6.12, 15

When the Lord presented himself to Gideon, he was utterly discouraged. It was long since the Midianites bittered the lives of God's people. They plundered the lands of the Israelites and took the best of the harvest. At that very moment Gideon was working to hide the wheat.

Note The marked contrast between the greeting of the Angel of Jehovah and Gideon's response. The angel refers to him as "*Hardworking and courageous man*». But the young Israelite did not feel brave or hard! On the contrary, he could only think that his family was poor and that he was the last of the house. Like David, he would not be the naturally chosen person of the family for any major project. He was accustomed to no one to consider. Looking, then, his resources, he exclaimed in all naturalness: "What shall I save Israel?"

This situation generates a series of questions in Gideon. (v. 13,15) "*Then Gideon answered him: Ah My lord, if the Lord is with us, why has all this happened to us? And where are all his wonders that our fathers have told us, saying, "Did not the Lord make us go up from Egypt?" But now the Lord has forsaken us, and delivered us in the hand of the Midianites... And he answered, O Lord, how shall I deliver Israel? Behold,*

my family is the poorest in Manasseh, and I the least of my father's house. "

Gideon was a realist man who would come to light with reality. A reality that does not consider the factor God.

We are in crisis, we have problems... what do we see? That problems and conflicts are bigger than us and that there is nothing to do. That God has gone to take a nap and left us more alone than one.

The funny thing is that God didn't fulminating Gideon. He hears him patiently, but calls him "hard and courageous man." Because God sees the potential in Gideon. And makes a promise that will be the key to the transformation of reality: (v. 16) *"But the Lord said to him, Surely I will be with you..."*

What do you think God sees in you? God's perspective on you and reality is completely different. We just need to assume, accept, receive, believe in the presence of God in our lives. God works from what we are, not from our fantasies or illusions of grandeur.

Here is one of the mysteries of God's work. To be successful in the projects he proposes to us, it is not important how we look or how we feel. The important thing is how God sees the matter, how he sees us, and that he is with us!

Sara: She looked like a barren old woman, with no prospects of fathering children. The Lord saw her as the mother of a multitude. **Moses:** It looked like a stutter, useful only to take care of sheep. The Lord saw him as the ideal man to liberate the people from the Egyptian yoke. **Peter:** He looked like a clumsy fisherman of Galilee. Christ saw him as the rock, a leader with a key role in the formation of the new church. **Ananias:** I saw in Saul a man dedicated to the violent persecution of the church. The Lord saw in this man a chosen instrument to bring the gospel to the Gentiles.

On the contrary, **Israel:** He was frightened of the giants of the earth and so he walked 40 years in the desert. **The Disciples of Jesus:** They were afraid when they saw the boat sink in the midst of a storm. **John the Baptist:** He hesitated to ask Jesus if he was the one to come or had to wait for another when he was in jail. **Elijah:** He fell into a depression for fear of a woman.

Different perceptions of reality that conditioned the way to confront it. We may think that this is objective data; Which is "indisputable". But the optics of God do not understand limitations or impossible. The key to a correct perception is not in our position, but in the perspective of God.

How do you see yourself? How do you see your circumstances? Do you look like a poor wretch who has few capacities and even fewer resources? Do you think God is in the margin of your circumstances; That he has forgotten about you? Do you think God sees him the same way? How

would the Angel of the Lord salute you if it appeared to you today?

It is true that it may be true that we are poor and have few resources. Gideon was truly a member of a poor family. The difficulty is not in the conditions we have. The problem is in believing that these conditions and circumstances limit God's activity and projects. The Lord does not see our reality as an impediment to his plans, because he is the one who does the work, not us. The Angel said to Gideon, go with your strength. He was not asking him to look for more resources, nor to throw a hand of treasures he did not possess. He simply wanted me to put his inability into the hands of the Almighty God. For, as the apostle Paul said, "The power of God is perfected in weakness." (2 Corinthians 12:9) a useless servant in the hands of God may be the most powerful weapon!

What optics are you going to apply to yourself or your circumstances? The "Shadow of the Giant"?, the pygmy with airs of grandeur?, or the sun? Gideon accepted God's call to fight his circumstances in God's way, from the perspective of God. In the end it turned out that God intervened in a powerful way and transformed Gideon's circumstances and demonstrated the truth from the perspective of God, the real one, that Gideon was a "hard and courageous man."

God will also transform your circumstances and show his truth about you.