

Gideon

Judges 6-8

"If God is for us, who can be against us?"

What does that mean?

Let's see how that passage will fit today's lesson.

Prayer

Oh, for a faith that will not shrink
Tho' pressed by many a foe;
That will not tremble on the brink
Of poverty or woe.

That will not murmur nor
complain
Beneath the chast'ning rod,
But in the hour of grief or pain
Can lean upon its God. Amen.



The Story

In the years that followed the death of Joshua, the children of Israel lost sight of the True God. They instead turned against God by worshiping false gods. One such false god was named Baal. Because of this great sin, the Lord allowed the enemies of His people, the Midianites and the Amalekites, to overrun Israel. They raided the homes of the children of Israel and stole their cattle and grain. For seven years this happened until finally the children of Israel turned to the Lord and cried out for help.

One day the Angel of the Lord appeared to a man named Gideon and said to him, "The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor!" Gideon was frightened. He did not know that this was the Angel of the Lord. How did this Man find him? (Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress, which was low in a rock,

almost like in a cave.) What did He want? The Angel told Gideon that God had chosen him to defeat the Midianites and the Amalekites. "How can I save Israel?" Gideon asked. "I am the least in my father's house!" Gideon asked the Man for a sign that would tell him that this message was from God. Gideon asked the Angel to stay for a meal. A young goat and baked bread was prepared for the guest. When the meal was brought, the Angel told Gideon to place the food on the rock and pour the broth over the food. The Angel touch the meat and the bread, and fire came out of the rock and burned the meal. Then the Angel disappeared. Gideon realized then that the Man with whom he had been speaking was the Angel of the Lord.

That night the Lord told Gideon to take his father's oxen and tear down the



altar of Baal that his village had erected. In the morning the town's people were very angry. They came to Gideon's father and demanded that he give them Gideon so that they could kill him. Joash, Gideon's father, told the town's people that if Baal was really a god, that he could defend himself against someone that breaks down his altar. The men left Joash's home and called Gideon Jerubaal.

Soon the enemies came again to the land of the Israelites. God told Gideon to prepare an army, but before doing so Gideon asked for two signs. First, he placed a fleece on the ground and asked God to allow the dew to be only on the fleece and not on the ground. In the morning there was no dew on the ground, but the fleece was filled with water. Then Gideon asked God to keep the fleece dry, while covering the ground with dew. The following morning everything was just as Gideon had asked.

Now Gideon called together an army. Thirty-two thousand men gathered to fight with Gideon, but God told Gideon his army was too large! Gideon called his army together and told any man who was afraid of the upcoming battle to leave and return to his home. Twenty-two thousand men left and ten thousand stayed to fight. The Lord told Gideon again that his army was too large. This time Gideon told the men to go to the water and drink from it. Some men knelt on both knees and lapped up the water like a dog. Three hundred of the men took cupped water into their hands and drank by taking their hands to their mouths. The Lord directed Gideon to take the 300 men and go meet the enemy.

That night the Lord said to Gideon, "Get up and go down to the camp of the enemy and I will give you the victory." The Lord suggested that if Gideon were afraid that he should go with his servant and listen to what the enemy was saying.

Gideon and his servant Purah crept down to the Midian camp and there listened to a dream that one of the soldiers had had. The soldier was retelling a friend about a dream where a round loaf of barley bread came tumbling into their camp. It hit a tent with such force that it knocked the tent down. The soldier explained the dream to be that the barley loaf was Gideon and that the battle would be a victory for Gideon and his God.

At midnight, Gideon gathered his 300 men and gave each man a pitcher which held fire inside and a trumpet. At the sound of Gideon's trumpet the other men blew their trumpets and broke the jars containing the fire, and shouted, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!" The enemy soldiers woke from their sleep, and in their confusion at the sounds and the light of Gideon's army they killed each other. Those that were left fled with Gideon's army pursuing them.

Gideon and his men, along with the children of Israel, chased their enemies and defeated them in battle. They enjoyed many years of peace under the blessing of the Lord.

Outer Aim - Gideon was chosen by God and given gifts to set God's people free from their enemies.

What the Story Tells Us - Answer the following questions.

1. What did God do when the children of Israel turned from obeying Him?
2. How many years of suffering did the children of Israel endure before they cried to the Lord in repentance?
3. To whom did the Angel of the Lord come?
4. Who is the Angel of the Lord? How do we know this?
5. What was the first sign of the that was given to Gideon?
6. What did God tell Gideon to destroy?
7. How did the townspeople react to this action?
8. What alternative action did Gideon's father suggest?
9. What was the next command given to Gideon by God?
10. What were the next two signs sent to Gideon by God?
11. What did God say about Gideon's army?
12. How was the final selection made?
13. How many soldiers were cut from the first count?
14. What did Gideon hear in the enemy camp?
15. What was Gideon's battle plan?
16. What did the enemy soldiers do when Gideon blew his trumpet?
17. What did the children of Israel ask Gideon to do?
18. How did Gideon answer Israel?

Inner Aim - We are chosen by God and given gifts for the work of the Church.

What God's Word Tells Us - Think about the following "Thought Problem."

We are to "walk by faith, not by sight!"

1. How did Gideon "walk by faith, not by sight"?
2. List some situations when we "walk by faith, not by sight" today:
3. Was it wrong of Gideon to ask for signs? Why?
4. What signs of God's presence can we expect today?
5. When else in the Old Testament did the Angel of the Lord appear to men? Why did the Angel come down to earth?

Passages

Luke 1:37 For with God nothing will be impossible.

Hebrews 12:6 For whom the LORD loves He chastens.

Psalms 118:8 It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.

Psalms 33:8 Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.

Hymn & Prayer - TLH #427 v. 1-3, 7

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!
What more can He say than to you He hath said
Who unto the Savior for refuge have fled?

In ev'ry condition - in sickness, in health,
In poverty's vale, or abounding in wealth,
At home and abroad, on the land, on the sea
The Lord, the Almighty, thy strength e'er shall be.

"Fear not, I am with thee, oh, be not dismayed;
For I am thy God and will still give thee aid;
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
Upheld by My righteous, omnipotent hand.

"The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose
I will not, I will not, desert to his foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never, forsake!" Amen.