



WEST VALLEY CHURCH OF CHRIST

9:30 am Bible Class—all ages	Phone Number: (623) 695-5623
10:30 am Sunday Worship	Website: www.wvcochrist.com
5:00 pm Proverbs study (online)	Email: wvchurchofchrist@gmail.com
7:00 pm Wednesday Bible Class	Facebook: West Valley church of Christ

April 10, 2022

What Gideon Teaches Christian Soldiers (Part 1)

In the time of Gideon, the Midianites are said to have come “as numerous as locusts” against Israel, evoking the image for near eastern readers of a locust plague (Judges 6:5 ESV). Israel was left “overpowered” (v. 2 ESV), with “no sustenance” (v. 4), and “greatly impoverished” (v. 6).

How can you beat a locust plague? Well, to put it simply, you can’t, but God can (cf. Matthew 19:26). The locust-like Midianite horde had come because “Israel did evil,” and they were powerless to stop them. Thankfully though, when Israel “cried out to the LORD,” He delivered them (Judges 6:8). The unorthodox method the Lord employed to do so, using Gideon and his three-hundred strong army equipped with pitchers, torches, and trumpets, features many lessons for Christians today. Like Timothy, we are soldiers of Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 2:3-4), and through the account of Gideon’s battle with the Midianites, we can learn what God desires and even demands of His soldiers today.

God’s army is not for the unbelieving. Before Gideon could lead God’s army to victory, God had to lead Gideon to faith. Our introduction to Gideon in the text is almost comical: Gideon is hiding in a winepress, secretly threshing wheat for fear of the Midianites. At that exact moment, an angel arrives and calls Gideon a “mighty man of valor” (Judges 6:11-12). Is he really a “mighty man of valor”? Well, no, but clearly, he could be. So why wasn’t he?

It’s significant that Gideon’s first reaction to the angel’s claim is not to question the “mighty man of valor” statement, but rather the statement: “The LORD is with you” (v. 12). Gideon responds by saying, “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...?” (v. 13).

When we fail to see in our God today the power He exerted in the past as Gideon did, we will find ourselves as Gideon found himself: cowering under oppression (albeit in our case, to Satan) and falling short of our potential. Gideon also doubted himself (v. 15), but he did so because he doubted God. Satan would have us see a detached, powerless, or even non-existent God and in so doing keep us in bondage. It is only through faith in a living, loving, almighty God that we can enjoy “the glorious liberty of the children of God” (Romans 8:21).

God was incredibly patient with Gideon’s unbelief, guiding Gideon to repentance (Judges 6:25-27) and responding favorably to Gideon’s three requests for confirmation (vv. 17-24, 36-40), two of which came after “the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon” (v. 34). God even proactively led Gideon to another confirmation of faith the night of his battle with the Midianites (Judges 7:9-15).

Today, God does not rebuke but instead rewards the seeker (Matthew 7:7-8; James 1:5), and He remains as patient as He can be with unbelievers (2 Peter 3:9). While He will not reward anyone who fails to believe in His power (Hebrews 11:6), He remains more than capable of helping us both to do and to become more than we ever dreamed possible (John 14:12; Ephesians 3:20-21). Like Gideon, we must believe.

(concluded next week)