

Prayer List

Gene
Veda
Wallace
Sheila
Ophelia

Services:

Sunday

Bible Class 9:00 a.m.
Assembly 10:00 a.m.
Assembly 11:00 a.m.

Wednesday

Bible Class 7:00 p.m.

Elders:

Brad Behrens - bradbehrens@pinolechurchofchrist.com

Michael Odom -

MichaelOdom@pinolechurchofchrist.com

This Week's Question:

What prince had his hair cut only once a year?

Answer To Last Week's Question:

Jacob - Genesis 28:10-15

Published by the church of Christ which meets at 755
Pinole Valley Road, Pinole, CA 94564, Phone (510)
724-1994, (Mailing address: church of Christ, P.O.

Pinole Tidings

www.pinolechurchofchrist.com

Vol. 15, No. 05 - November 17, 2013

Every Man Stood In His Place

Robert Harkrider

All odds were against them. Their army enrolled only 300 men, and they were to conquer an enemy as innumerable as the sand of the sea. They had no weapon ordinarily used for battle, but only a trumpet, an empty pitcher, and a lamp. From a human standard, any vision for victory was impossible to discern.

Gideon, a man of faith, was chosen by God to lead His army (Hebrews 11:32). The story is recorded in Judges 6; 7; and 8. Like all men of faith, Gideon's trust was not in his own wisdom or strength, but in the Lord. In fact, when he was first told that he should go fight against the Midianites and save Israel, Gideon's reaction was one of humility. He said, "my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house."

Humility is an essential element of faith. When one is lifted up with pride, he feels self-sufficient. This is the reason "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called" (1 Corinthians 1:26). People who trust in themselves feel no need of help, so they are unwilling to submit. By contrast, a humble

individual yields himself, therefore Jesus said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:3).

A fascinating part of the story is the method of proof that Gideon requested of the Lord. He asked that the fleece of wool only be wet with dew and all the earth surrounding it be dry, and then the reverse of this on the next day. One might evaluate Gideon’s request as lack of faith, but could it be possible that he was doing what all of us should do? That is, he was making sure beyond any doubt that this was God’s will.

In order to walk by faith rather than by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7), our steps must be based upon the word of God (Romans 10:17). Many who are religious and sincere have not tested the source of their faith. “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1). Do not be like the Jews who reject Jesus as the Christ: “they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God” (Romans 10:2–3). We need to be like Gideon in the sense that we demand proof that our religious actions are based on a thus saith the Lord.

Gideon’s faith was outstanding because he had courage to obey the will of God even when human wisdom dictated that to do so would be foolish. Even with an army of 32,000, the enemy outnumbered them. However, God said that this was too many because they would take credit to themselves for the victory. So, all who were fearful returned to their families, leaving 10,000 valiant soldiers. Again, this was too many, therefore

Gideon took them to the water and separated those who bowed on their knees to drink from those who brought water up to their mouth with their hands. Only 300 were chosen to defeat this enemy who “lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude.”

Courage of conviction was necessary. Divided into three companies of a hundred each, they positioned themselves around the camp of the Midianites. When the signal was given they blew their trumpets, broke the pitchers so the lamps would shine, and “they stood every man in his place round about the camp” (Judges 7:21). The Midianites were startled out of their sleep by the sound of trumpets and able to see only the lamps shining in the darkness, “the Lord set every man’s sword against his fellow.” The men of Israel pursued after those who remained as they fled into the night.

Obedience of faith is not always convenient. The devil tests us in various ways. Faith may be challenged through ridicule of family and friends, through pressure at work, or simply the temptation to forsake worship on the Lord’s day in order to fulfill selfish desires that are morally right. Though we do not have the exact test Gideon and his army faced, we too must stand in our place with the courage of conviction to do God’s will no matter what human wisdom may dictate.

Christianity Magazine
September–October 1998
Volume 15 Number 9/10