

News & Notes

Sunday, August 30, 2009

Remember in Prayer: Mary Baily; Robert Bennett; Melvin Bennett; John L. Clemmer; Clifton Holmes; Dot Ketchum; Dallas King; Billy Liming; John and Deliah Mann; Maria Mayes; Ann Ray; Curtis Ray; Gallen Runsick; Katherine Shaw; Ruby Tapp; Calvin Ursery; Joan Wilkerson; Alvie Williford;

Pantry item for the month of August is trash bags.

Order forms for CDs of the Wednesdays in August are in the foyer.

We **rejoice that Jason Duke** was restored to the body of Christ this past Wednesday.

Ashland Events: Today: Fellowship meal following morning service and early afternoon joint service at South Ashland;

Area Events: September 12: Family lectureship/workshop at the North Green Street congregation in Tupelo; September 20-25: Gospel meeting at the Grand Junction congregation;

Sermon in Preview:

AM: The Thessalonians – Preparing for the Coming of Christ

PM: Early afternoon joint service at South Ashland

For the Record (August 23, 2009):

Attendance: 80 Contribution: \$1107.00 Budget: \$1459.00

The Ashland Church of Christ

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Sunday:

Bible Study 9:30 AM

Worship 10:30 AM

Worship 5:00 PM

Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 PM

Shepherds:

Barney King
Jeff Roberson
Carrol Street

ASHLAND ANNOUNCER

“Note Those Who So Walk”

Philippians 3:17

2Thessalonians 3:14

Gideon – Against All Odds

Jeremy Northrop

Many people enjoy watching sports programs. Sometimes, in various sporting events, the person who most people would never have thought would do anything significant is the one responsible for the winning play. Sometimes, the team who is considered very weak in comparison is the team that comes back and wins the game. Sports commentators and enthusiasts alike make comments when the underdog makes a comeback. It is simply enjoyable to watch and perhaps part of the reason watching sports is such a popular pastime.

Judges 6-8 records the account of an underdog. It was a sad time for Israel. God allowed the Midianites to oppress Israel because of their sin (6:1). Because of their poverty, Israel cried out to God wanting Him to deliver them (6:7). God warned them through a prophet that they had not obeyed Him and were thus under the oppression of the Midianites and the Amorites (6:10). Because of their sin, they were forced to submit to foreign powers.

In Judges 6:11-18, an angel of the Lord appears and tells him of the special use God has for him – Gideon is going to deliver Israel from the oppression of the Midianites. When Gideon hears this, he is surprised. He expresses his weak condition in verse 15: “O my Lord, how can I save Israel? Indeed my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.” In the subsequent verses, the angel assures Gideon the Lord has chosen him to deliver Israel but Gideon requests a sign (6:18). While at this point Gideon requested one sign, he received several signs over the course of three chapters.

Gideon prepared some meat, broth, and some unleavened bread and brought them to the angel of the Lord (6:19). The angel told Gideon to put the meat and bread on a rock and to pour the broth on top of them (6:20). Then, the angel miraculously created a fire which consumed it all (6:21). Gideon was convinced this was an angel sent from God (6:22). In verse 23, God Himself speaks to Gideon telling him he has nothing to fear. God commanded Gideon to tear down the altar built to Baal and build an altar for Jehovah (6:25-26). Gideon and his ten men did so (6:27).

Judges 6:28-35 records how the people, once they saw the altar to Baal and the image beside it torn down, were very upset and even wanted to kill Gideon (6:30). Joash, Gideon's father, defended Gideon and said, "If he is a god, let him plead for himself, because his altar has been torn down!" (6:31). Gideon gathered people together in order to fight the Midianites and the Amalekites. This is another sign God had given to Gideon to show he was the man to accomplish God's purpose.

Judges 6:36-40 records two more signs given to Gideon which shows he was the man whom God had chosen. Gideon prayed an interesting prayer in Judges 6:37, "...look, I shall put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor; if there is dew on the fleece only, and it is dry on all the ground, then I shall know that You will save Israel by my hand, as You have said." The beginning of the next verse says, "And it was so." Then Gideon prayed the opposite – that the dew would be on the ground and not on the fleece. The first part of verse 40 says, "And God did it so that night." There was no doubt God called Gideon to the word of delivering Israel.

Judges 7 records how 300 men were selected to go with Gideon and overthrow the Midianites and the Amalekites. Judges 7:12 says of these people, they were, "...numerous as locusts; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the seashore in multitude." The chapter goes on to record how the 300 men conquered these people with trumpets, pitchers, and torches. Judges 8 records how Gideon overthrew and conquered the kings of Midian. Interestingly, once Gideon overthrew Midian and her kings, he made an ephod (object associated with worship) and Israel worshipped it instead of Jehovah (8:27). The latter part of Judges 8 records Gideon's death (8:32). There are many lessons to be learned about how God will use the underdog to accomplish His will.

Often times, God calls the underdog to accomplish His will.

Mankind likes to call superman, some great individual who has done great things. Or man might decide to call a huge army to accomplish great things like overthrowing people that number as the sands of the seashore. Man is often tempted to use the socially elite (the rich or people who have rich connections). God does not call such people. Most Christians today cannot even relate to such people. God called the underdog in Gideon and his 300 men. He often calls the underdog even today in order to accomplish His will.

While Gideon was an underdog in many respects, there are certain qualities about him which God knew. God knew the kind of leader Gideon would be. Gideon was a man who made sure of things, not boisterous or one to jump into things blindly (6:21, 36-40). Gideon was a man who worshipped Jehovah (7:15). Gideon was a man to obey God regardless of the circumstances (7:3, 5, 6). The humanity of Gideon is also seen in that he was afraid (7:10), concerned (6:13), and alone in his worship to God (8:27). Yet, he did what was right regardless of the concerns he may have had. Today, the church needs Christians who will do right even when it looks like it will do nothing but bring destruction and havoc.

The way that God accomplishes His will is through His power, not the power of man. Gideon was not great on his own accord or merits. It was not his 300 men that made him great or able to overthrow Midian. God made Gideon great. In fact, it was so that people would know it was the work of God that God downsized the army to 300 men: Judges 7:2, "And the Lord said to Gideon, 'The people who are with you are too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel claim glory for itself against Me, saying, 'My own hand has saved me.'" The power of God is also seen in that fact that He sent Gideon and his men with a torch, a pitcher, and a trumpet. God controlled the battle. It was God who made Gideon do great things and Jehovah can make His own people today do great things.

Against All Odds Gideon was able to accomplish great things. Today, Christians can do the same thing when they will take upon themselves the qualities Gideon possessed. Are God's people today willing to be the underdog who comes back? Are Christians today willing to accept the call of God? Are Christians willing to allow God to succeed through them? Are the children of God willing to obey God regardless of the consequences? May God's people everywhere determine to obey God and succeed *Against All Odds*.