

Will you be a Chosen one?
Sermon by Pastor Diana J. Perkins – May 27, 2018

In Judges 6&7 there is a wonderful story of a man named Gideon who God chose to free the Israelites from the bondage of Midianites. Because the Israelites repeatedly fell into idol worship, God allowed them to be overtaken by their enemies. When they came to their senses and cried out to God, he would send a deliverer for them and for a time they would follow the commandments that brought them peace and security.

This particular time, their suffering was very great. The Midianites were cruel people and the Israelites ran to the mountains and hid in caves because of fear. Every time the Israelites would plant crops, the Midianites and the Amalekites as well as other eastern nations would ride in with camels, set up their tents and let their livestock eat the crops as far as the town of Gaza. The Midianites stole food, sheep, cattle and donkeys. They were like a band of locust for they were countless and they ruined the land wherever they went. They took almost everything that the Israelites had leaving them destitute and the Israelites cried out to God for help. God sent a prophet to remind them that He is the God of deliverance. He brought them out of bondage and gave them the land of milk and honey. He was their God that protected them from disease and hardships, he provided food and kept their clothes and sandals from wearing out for 40 years. Yet they served and worshipped the gods of the Amorites and so God allowed their enemies to overtake them.

One day a man named Gideon was threshing grain in a shallow pit where he could not be seen by the Midianites. An angel of the LORD sat under a big tree nearby. He spoke to Gideon these words: “The LORD is helping you and you are a strong warrior.” Gideon answered, “Please don’t take this wrong, but if the LORD is helping us, then why

have all these awful things happened? We've heard how the LORD performed miracles, and rescued our ancestors from Egypt. But those things happened long ago. Now the LORD has abandoned us to the Midianites."

Then the LORD himself said, "Gideon, you will be strong, because I am giving you the power to rescue Israel from the Midianites. Gideon replied, "But how can I rescue Israel? My clan is the weakest one in Manasseh, and everyone else in my family is more important than I am."

The LORD said, "Gideon, you can rescue Israel because I am going to help you! Defeating the Midianites will be as easy as beating up one man." Gideon said, "It is hard to believe that I'm actually talking to the LORD. Please do something so I'll know that you are really the LORD. And wait here until I bring you an offering. Gideon went home and killed a goat and cooked it and saved the broth. He also made some bread. He then returned and placed it under the tree where the angel had been. God's angel said, "Gideon, put the meat and the bread on this rock and pour the broth over them. Gideon did as he was asked. The angel was holding a walking stick and he touched the meat and the bread with the end of the stick. Flames jumped from the rock and burned up the meat and the bread. When Gideon looked, the angel had disappeared. Gideon realized he had spoken with God and he was afraid that he was going to die. The LORD told him to calm down for there was nothing to be afraid of for he was not going to die. Gideon built an altar for worshipping the LORD and called it "The LORD Calms our fears."

The LORD gave Gideon instructions that built his confidence in the LORD. He first had him tear down the altars that were of Baal. God protected him from the wrath of the Midianites when they found their altars torn down.

God's spirit came upon Gideon and he followed the instructions given to him by the LORD and God calmed his fears. Gideon needed reassurance and the LORD gave it to him. God told him to gather men for battle and the LORD tested them. Of the multitude of men that came to fight, only 300 of them were chosen by God to fight the Midianites. The last thing that God did was to encourage Gideon to take a soldier and go into the camp of the Midianites and listen outside their tents as a confirmation that victory was at hand. When the men went there at night, they heard one of the enemy guards talk about a dream he had the night before. He dreamed of a flat loaf of barley bread that went tumbling into their camp. It hit the headquarters tent and the tent flipped over and fell down. The other soldier said, "Your dream must have been about Gideon, the Israelite commander. It means God will let him and his army defeat the Midianite army and everyone else in our camp." As soon as Gideon heard about the dream and what it meant, he bowed down to praise God and then went back to the Israelite camp and shouted, "Let's go! The LORD is going to let us defeat the Midianite army." God used only 300 men to defeat a multitude of enemy soldiers. God will use those who trust in him to overcome the enemy that threatens to defeat and destroy the church of the Living God!