

## SATURDAY, MARCH 3

### GIDEON'S CALL (JUDGES 6)

The Israelites struggled as they sought the Promised Land, which was literally land set apart for them as a holy nation. In Judges 6, the Israelites are oppressed by the Midianites, and this nation of Yahweh's people hid in caves and in mountains (6:2). When the Israelites planted on the land, the Midianites uprooted it, killing their livestock, ravaging their space. Why did the Lord allow this? Through the Lord's prophet, it is explained why the Lord allowed this suffering. The Israelites were commanded to worship the Lord, not other gods; but, the Lord says, "You have not given heed to my voice." (6:10)

We are all influenced by our culture, our neighbors, the voices in our world that often drown out the voice of the Lord, who reminds us, "You have not given heed to my voice." In some instances, we choose to ignore the voice of the Lord; in other cases, the noise from the world makes it impossible to hear the voice of God.

But Gideon hears, and he obeys. When the Lord commands Gideon to pull down the statue to Baal, Gideon does so by night. The possible repercussions of the reclamation of land for the Lord are frightening; Gideon fears the reactions of his family and the townspeople (6:27). The people react by threatening Gideon's life, yet Gideon's father says to let Baal defend himself. In the following verses, the Lord defends himself by using Gideon, yet not by allowing Gideon to even have the possibility of taking credit for the victory. Gideon's army is diminished from 32,000 soldiers to 300 soldiers. Gideon and his men could never take credit for a victory; a miracle from the hand of the Lord, the defense of the one true God, could only come from Yahweh.

It is the space in Gideon's own heart, his own decision to heed the voice of the Lord, that makes this holy ground where the Lord reigns. When Gideon decides to obey and then takes the outward action of pulling down the altar to Baal, there is space for holy ground. When Gideon heeds the voice of the Lord and diminishes the army, the way is paved for the Lord to lead the Israelites to victory, to claim the holy ground.

Similar battles are waged in our own minds. Struggles such as those Gideon faced rage in our own hearts. The ground for which the Enemy battles is the same ground for which the Lord battles. But the battle takes place inside, and our actions reflect which voices we've listened to, which victor has gained ground in our lives.

Gideon and his army undoubtedly had the hand of the Holy God on them. There was no possibility that they could have claimed the victory over the enemy for themselves; Gideon chose to obey, and the victory was the Lord's.

In what instances do we struggle most with listening to the voice of the Lord? Have we trusted the Lord completely, allowing our hearts to be spaces of holy ground? Have we given the Lord the credit for the victory?