

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

GIDEON, A MAN OF FAITH AND HUMILITY

International Sunday School Lesson
For July 20

Memory Selection: "Teach me thy way, O Lord; and lead me in a plain path."—Psalm 27:11.

Lesson Text: Judges 6:11-27; 7:1-31; 8:22-23.

Joshua's campaigns did not result in the entire conquest of Canaan. The Israelites occupied some regions more or less completely, in others they were joint possessors with the former inhabitants, and in a large area, including some of the best parts of the country, the Canaanites remained in control and enjoyment.

During the centuries which followed Joshua, there was no united organization of all the tribes, but time and again, as a crisis developed, it would be met by the nearby Israelites, usually galvanized into heroic action by the inspiration of some courageous leader. As we pointed out in a previous lesson, these periodical deliverers were called Judges. This week we consider the heroic faith of Gideon, generally recognized by all as the most outstanding of the Judges.

Gideon lived in a disturbed period. The Israelites were harried by the Amalekites and the Midianites. Swarms of the latter descended upon them from across the Jordan and stole their crops and cattle, and other possessions. Finally, Gideon realized that he had been chosen by God as the agent for deliverance. He began by promptly destroying the altar to Baal in his community, and insisting upon repentance and worship of the true God.

Gideon summoned the members of nearby tribes to gather under his leadership. He made a trial of Jehovah, using a fleece of wool and God patiently convinced him. Then Jehovah put Gideon's faith to a severe test, advising him so that over two-thirds of his men departed for home, leaving only ten thousand. These were further selected until only 300 remained.

"One lesson we may learn from this thinning of the ranks," says the Rev. Alexander MacLaren, "namely that we need not be anxious to count heads, when we are sure that we are doing God's work, nor even be afraid of being in a minority. Minorities are generally right when they are the apostles of new thoughts, though the minorities which cleave to some old fossil are ordinarily wrong. The prophet and his men were alone and ringed about with enemies when he said, 'They that be with us are more than they that be with them,' and yet he was right, for the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire. Let us be sure that we are on God's side, and then let us not mind how few are in the ranks with us, nor be afraid, though the far-extended front of the enemy threatens to curl around our flanks and enclose us. The 300 heroes had God with them, and that was enough."

Spying upon the Midianites, Gideon discovered that a general fear existed of him and his followers. To utilize the slender resources of manpower at his command, Gideon resorted to a trick. "A stratagem often used in ancient warfare was now arranged," says Cunningham Geikie. "Dividing the band of heroes into three companies, Gideon gave each man a trumpet, an empty earthen pitcher and a torch to be concealed in the pitcher until the right moment. He had been encouraged by an incident of the previous night. Gliding in the darkness into the camp of the Bedouins, like the English Alfred into the camp of the Danes, he heard a Midianite predicting, from a dream he had had, the destruction of the host and his own name had been mentioned as the leader they dreaded."

When the battle developed, Gideon's plan proved entirely successful. The Midianites were defeated and slaughtered. They were pursued until utterly shattered with a destruction so great that Isaiah later referred to it as on a par with that of the Egyptians at the Red Sea. By requiring Gideon to depend upon so slight a human force, Jehovah made sure that the Israelites would realize their dependence upon him.

It is interesting to notice that men are often called to great service from ordinary tasks. Gideon was threshing wheat, Amos was tending his herd and fig trees and Eliseus was plowing when each received his divine call. There are doubtless countless avenues of service open to men and women today in more or less limited circumstances and surroundings if they would only realize on a faith in the dependability of God's support of any good cause.

A lesson from the gradual diminution of Gideon's army can be applied to the church today. It is full of many faint-hearted members, deficient in faith and vision. We have often wondered if the church, its eagerness to gain physical numbers, hasn't lost sight of the truth in its dependence upon God's support of any good cause.

THE MONOTONY OF LIFE . . .

Ever trudge along a road like this? Step upon step, then a thousand more . . . yet the road stretches endlessly onward. It's a weary journey.

Give me the winding road every time! There is a new vision around every turn . . . each step brings you closer to something.

There are times when life seems a long road that has no turning. Tiresome routine can stifle a man's spirit until he trembles at the very sameness of the days.

Christianity is God's own answer to the monotony of life. The teachings of Christ open new vistas of beauty and happiness. Sunday worship, daily prayer and an abiding faith help us to discover a sense of progress and bring us closer to our God-given destiny.

THE CHURCH FOR ALL . . . ALL FOR THE CHURCH

The Church is the greatest factor on earth for the building of character and good citizenship. It is a storehouse of spiritual values. Without a strong Church, neither democracy nor civilization can survive. There are four sound reasons why every person should attend services regularly and support the Church. They are: (1) For his own sake. (2) For his children's sake. (3) For the sake of his community and nation. (4) For the sake of the Church itself, which needs his moral and material support. Plan to go to church regularly and read your Bible daily.

Day	Book	Chapter	Verses
Sunday	Psalm	57	1-14
Monday	Psalm	120	105-112
Tuesday	Isaiah	40	1-6
Wednesday	Isaiah	40	9-27
Thursday	Proverbs	4	10-20
Friday	Matthew	3	1-8
Saturday	John	1	19-49

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Perquimans Church Services

HERTFORD BAPTIST CHURCH
C. W. Duling, Pastor
Sunday School, 9:45 A. M.
Morning Worship, 11:00 o'clock.
Evening Worship, 8 o'clock.
Mid-week Services, Wednesday at 8 P. M.

BETHLEHEM CHURCH OF CHRIST
Joe Brickhouse, Pastor
First Sunday
11 A. M. and 8 P. M.

BURGESS BAPTIST CHURCH
Colon Jackson, Jr., Pastor
Church services second and fourth Sundays at 11 A. M.
Sunday School at 10:00 A. M.
Church service 7:45 P. M. second and fourth Sundays.

PERQUIMANS CHARGE CHURCHES
H. M. Jamieson, Pastor
First Sunday:
New Hope Church, 11:00 A. M.
Oak Grove Church, 7:00 P. M.
Second Sunday
Winfall Church, 11:00 A. M.
Cedar Grove Church, 10 A. M.
Woodland Church, 7:00 P. M.
Third Sunday
Oak Grove Church, 11:00 A. M.
New Hope Church, 7:00 P. M.
Fourth Sunday
Cedar Grove Church, 11:00 A. M.
Woodland Church, 10 A. M.
Winfall Church, 7:00 P. M.
Fifth Sunday
Woodland Church, 11:00 A. M.
Prayer Meeting each Wednesday at Winfall Church, 7:00 P. M.

ANDERSON'S METHODIST CHURCH
R. M. Gradeless, Pastor
Church School, 10:00 A. M.
Morning Worship, 11:00 A. M., second and fourth Sundays.

WOODVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH
James F. Burke, Pastor
Church Services on second and fourth Sundays at 11 A. M.
First and Third Sundays at 7:45 P. M.
Sunday School 9:45 A. M.

UP RIVER FRIENDS CHURCH
Elizabeth White, Pastor
Sunday School, 9:45 A. M.
Church Services, 11 A. M.
Christian Endeavor, 6:30 P. M.

BETHEL BAPTIST CHURCH
Rev. Bennie Crawford, Pastor
Sunday School, 10 A. M.
Preaching first and third Sundays at 11 A. M.
Preaching second and fourth Sunday evening at 7:30.

PINEY WOODS FRIENDS CHURCH
No Pastor At Present
Sunday School, 10 A. M.
Morning worship—11:00 A. M.

WHITEVILLE GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH
Sunday School, 11 A. M., every Sunday except third Sunday.
Church services every third Sunday at 8 P. M.

HERTFORD METHODIST CHURCH
A. L. Chaplin, Pastor
Church School, 9:45 A. M.
Morning Worship, 11:00 o'clock.
Youth Fellowship, 6:45 P. M.
Evening Worship, 7:30 P. M.
Mid-week Fellowship, Wednesday at 7:30 P. M.

BAGLEY SWAMP PILGRIM
Coy S. Saunders, Pastor
Sunday School, 10:00 A. M.
Morning Worship, 11:00 o'clock.
Young People's Meeting, 6:30 P. M.
Evening Worship, 7:30 o'clock.
Mid-week Services, Thursday at 7:30 P. M.

HOLY TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH
Rev. Charles F. Wall, Rector.
9:45 A. M., Church School, every Sunday.
9:00 A. M., Holy Communion, 1st Sunday.
8:30 A. M., Holy Communion, 2nd, 4th, 5th Sundays.
11:00 A. M., Holy Communion, 3rd Sunday.
11:00 A. M., Morning Prayer, 2nd, 4th, 5th Sundays.
10:00 A. M., Holy Communion, Fridays and Saints' Days.

BEREA CHURCH OF CHRIST
Walker Perry, Pastor.
2nd and 4th Sunday at 10:30 A. M.
Morning worship on first and third Sundays at 11 A. M.
Evening worship first and third Sundays at 7:30 P. M.

CHAPPELL HILL BAPTIST CHURCH
A. E. Oulav, Pastor
Sunday School, 3 P. M. every first Sunday.
Church Service 3 P. M. every first Sunday.
Sunday school at 11 A. M. every second, third and fourth Sunday.

Go To Church Your Church Any Church But Go