

WORD

¹² And the angel of the Lord appeared to him and said to him, "The Lord is with you, O mighty man of valor."¹³ And Gideon said to him, "Please, my lord, if the Lord is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all his wonderful deeds that our fathers recounted to us, saying, 'Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt?' But now the Lord has forsaken us and given us into the hand of Midian."¹⁴ And the Lord turned to him and said, "Go in this might of yours and save Israel from the hand of Midian; do not I send you?"

*²² Then Gideon perceived that he was the angel of the Lord. And Gideon said, "Alas, O Lord God! For now I have seen the angel of the Lord face to face."²³ But the Lord said to him, "Peace be to you. Do not fear; you shall not die."²⁴ Then Gideon built an altar there to the Lord and called it, *The Lord Is Peace*. To this day it still stands at Ophrah, which belongs to the Abiezrites.*

JUDGES 6:12-14,22-24

The book of Judges tells the story of Israel's repeating cycle of disobedience to God and God's mercy and faithfulness to deliver them from their enemies. The Midianites was one of the enemies of the Israelites — this goes back to the time of Abraham. For years, they oppressed the Israelites until God raised a judge, Gideon, to deliver His people. While beating out wheat in the winepress, Gideon encountered God. He was forced to thresh his wheat in the winepress, a pit that was probably hidden from view, which hid him from the Midianites as they dominated Israel. Because of the Midianite army, the Israelites rarely harvested crops and some were even forced to live in caves.

The Israelites hit rock bottom for not trusting God. Let's look at how God used Gideon to deliver the nation of Israel.

1

God called Gideon for what seemed to be an impossible task.

When the Lord appeared to Gideon, he did not hesitate to tell God his problems. He questioned God's apparent lack of help for him and his nation. He overlooked the fact that it was the people who brought about this calamity to themselves when they decided to disobey God. God responded to Gideon with a command to go and save Israel. But Gideon looked down on himself. He came from a poor family in Manasseh and was the least in his father's house. In essence, he was saying that he was not qualified for the task.

Yet God promised him that He will be with him and that he shall strike the Midianites as one man (verse 16).

Just like Gideon, we too come from a new generation that has not seen the great miracles of the past. We tend to question the genuineness of our encounters with God and when God calls us to do something, we tend to question ourselves and use our circumstances as excuses for not being able to follow. It can be easy for us to overlook personal accountability and the mere fact that it is not just anyone calling us, it's God. Just as God told Gideon, "I will be with you", this is still true for us now.

2

God invited Gideon to trust in Him, the giver of peace.

Gideon sacrificed food offering and asked for a sign if it is really God who has called him to save the Israelites. An Angel of the Lord appeared to him and reached out his staff and touched the offering; and a fire rose up from a rock and miraculously consumed the entire offering. As the angel departed from Gideon's sight, he knew that it was God. He was shocked by the experience and prayed for mercy because he had seen an angel of the Lord face-to-face. The Jews believed that seeing God would bring about their death. But the Lord assured him by saying: "Peace be to you. Do not fear; you shall not die" (verse 23).

This promise left such an impression to Gideon that he built an altar where the angel of the Lord had appeared to him and called it Jehovah-shalom, the Lord is peace.

Unless we experience the God of peace, we cannot experience true peace. The Hebrew word of peace is Shalom—a word denoting wholeness or completeness. Peace is not limited to the absence of worry, problems, quarrel, or war; peace is not a condition. Rather, peace is a person—Jesus Christ. We experience the God of peace when, instead of succumbing to our situations, we submit our lives to Jesus. With Jesus, we can hold on to God, the giver of peace

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. John 14:27

APPLICATION

- What is God calling you to do right now? Pray and ask God to give you grace and peace to obey.
- How can you relate to Gideon's story? What is one thing that you fear the most? Present it to God.
- Gideon was an unlikely leader at first – hesitant and fearful. Do you picture yourself as a leader? Why or why not? What would God have to change in you to make you a leader?

PRAYER

Worship. Jehovah Shalom came when Israel was in apostasy. He came not to judge nor to blame but to save and bring deliverance from the enemies. Gideon built an altar to God. Let us build an altar of thanksgiving to this awesome, wonderful God!

Encounter. When Gideon encountered Jehovah Shalom, his fears, doubts, and complaints were appeased. We all experience what Gideon experienced. Ask the Father to give you and your family an encounter with Jehovah Shalom. Pray that the peace of God will guard our hearts and mind in Christ Jesus.

Be empowered. God empowered Gideon to destroy the idols of his family. Pray that you will be empowered to destroy idols in life that are preventing you from doing God's purpose and will.

Decree Peace. Jesus decreed peace to the stormy wind and it went still. For this week, actively decree peace to the circumstances of your life that need God's peace.



VICTORY

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