

West Valley Church of God
P. O. Box 343
San Fernando, CA 91341

Pastors & Elders

Pastor: Wayne and Patty Mitchell
West Valley Elders
Carlton & Judy Green
Cornell Smith

Happenings

Upon the occasion of celebration for Aaron's graduation from college, are (Left to Right), Edit Ancona, Aaron Asher, Talia Asher, Jenni Asher.

Edit is presenting Aaron with congratulations from all of us. Little Talia is enjoying all the attention as well!



More Happenings

Crystal Sylvester, who recently graduated from High School, is planning to attend college very soon.

She received gifts and congratulations from all of us for her diligent efforts. Shown here, is her dad, who offered an amazing prayer of thanksgiving and praise for the healing and inspiration he has received from the Lord.



Isa:58:9: Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am.

Editor's Corner

• Submissions for inclusion in "The Vine" are welcome **at any time**. We need your input! Please email to the editor (See right column) - in **10 point type, Arial font**, for easier placement.

Send submissions to:
TheVineEditor@aol.com -
Subject Line: Title of Article. **Time sensitive** submissions due **5th** of month for following month's issue. **News and Inspirational articles welcome any time.**

NOTICE... Many paintings shown in this publication are for sale. Check your old copies. Contact Editor.



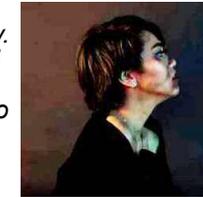
"I am the Vine, you are the branches: He that abides in me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit: for without me you can do nothing."
John 15:5

August 2019

West Valley Church of God -- "Come worship with us..."
Submissions: TheVineEditor@aol.com
We meet at the Congregational Church of Northridge
9659 Balboa Boulevard, Northridge, CA 91325
Saturday Service 10:30 A.M. - www.westvalleywgc.org

Is There Anything Too Much For Us?

The next time someone says that God doesn't give us more than we can handle, point them to Judges 7. God's instructing Gideon to take on over 100,000 enemy soldiers with just 300 fits in the "more than you can handle" category. Imagine how Gideon and his servant, Purah, must have felt trying to come to grips with a humanly impossible assignment.



too big to face Midian's. Israel would think more highly of himself than he ought to think when God gave him victory. So Gideon had sent home whoever was afraid.

When 22,000 hit the road, Gideon had to quiet his own fear. Now Israel was outnumbered ten-to-one. But God was with them and armies had overcome such odds before.

Oddly, the Lord considered these odds still too much in

Standing on the side of Mount Gilboa, Gideon gazed over the Valley of Jezreel, which sprawled beneath him northward toward the hill of Moreh. The valley was a sea of tents, teeming with more than 100,000 Midian warriors.

That morning, the Lord had judged Israel's army of 32,000

Israel's favor. So in obedience to the Lord's instruction, Gideon brought his small, thirsty army down to the spring of Harod. And he gave his servant, Purah, the strangest command of his brief military career: "Observe all the men as they drink. Have every man who laps his water like a dog stand off to the side."

Upcoming Events

• Bible Studies, Letters and other Events...see Weekly Bulletin and Bulletin Board.



Gideon supervised the selection, but when so few were being chosen, he just let Purah finish the count and he climbed back up Gilboa to pray and survey.

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It wasn't long before Purah emerged from the trees. "So what's the total?"

"Three hundred, sir," said Purah.

Gideon chuckled to himself. "Three hundred." He looked back toward the human hoard in the valley and

Is There Anything Too Much For Us? (cont.)

was quiet for a moment. "That's less than I expected."

"Yes, sir," said Purah. "But thankfully, three hundred doesn't reduce our strength much."

Gideon breathed deeply. "No, Purah. The three hundred are not the reductions. They're the army. The others are the reductions."

Purah stood dazed for a moment, staring at Gideon. "The three hundred are the army?"

Gideon nodded slowly, still looking into the Midian-infested Jezreel.

"But that's not an army! That's how many should be guarding an army's baggage!"

Purah stepped up beside Gideon. Together they watched smoke columns rising from ten times more cooking fires than they now had warriors. Purah shook his head and said, "Even if we were all like the mighty men of old, three hundred could not overcome 100,000." He paused. "And we aren't mighty men." Another pause. "And there's more than a 100,000 down there."

Both were silent for a while. In the quiet, the Lord spoke to Gideon, "*With the 300 men who lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hand, and let all the others go every man to his home.*"

Then Gideon said to Purah, "During the exodus, how many mighty men did it take to destroy Egypt and its army or part the Red Sea?"

Purah thought briefly. "None."

"How many did it take to tear down Jericho's walls?"

"None."

"How many did it take to feed two million of our people in the wilderness every day for forty years?"

"None. I get your point."

"The mightiest are those who trust in the Lord and obey him, no matter how impossible things appear."

"In our people's history, the mightiest have not been the strong warriors," Gideon said. "The mightiest have been those who trusted in the Lord and obeyed him, no matter how impossible things appeared. He has promised us that Midian will be defeated. He has chosen only three hundred of us. We will obey; he will act. And when Midian falls, it will be clear to everyone who felled him." Then he looked at Purah and smiled. "Maybe the Lord just needs us to guard his baggage!"

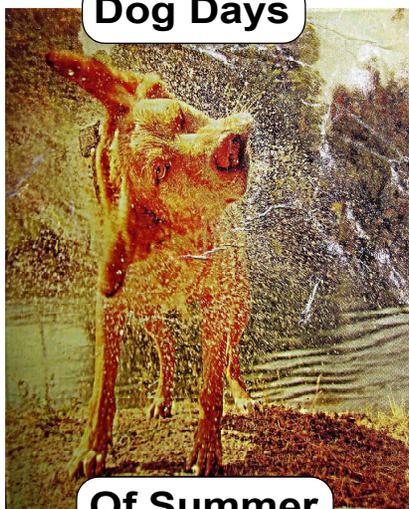
Purah didn't laugh. He only replied, "Should we dismiss the others?" Gideon nodded.

Later that night, in the tiny camp, Gideon lay praying. Every plan to mobilize 300 against 100,000 seemed ludicrous.

Suddenly, he was aware of the Presence. He sat up, his heart beating fast.

The Lord said, "*Arise, go down against the camp, for I have given it into your hand. But if you are afraid to go down, go down to the*

Dog Days



Of Summer

camp with Purah your servant. And you shall hear what they say, and afterward your hands shall be strengthened to go down against the camp."

Purah woke to Gideon's nudge and whispered words, "Let's go."

"Where are we going?" Purah whispered back, getting up quickly.

"To the Midian camp, just you and me. The Lord has something he wants to show us."

They quietly crept toward the nearest Midian outpost, veiled by the clouded sky, and saw two inattentive guards talking. Just as they got within earshot, one said, "I had a strange dream before being woken for duty tonight."

"Tell me," the other said.

"This cake of barley came tumbling into our camp, crashed into the tent, turned it over, and flattened it."

The other guard looked at him alarmed and said, "I know what that means! The cake can be none other than Gideon, the son of Joash! God has given us all into his hand!"

Gideon and Purah looked at one another with the same stunned expression.

Cast Your Cares

With renewed faith, Gideon and Purah roused their mini army and launched a night attack. This threw the Midians into a panic and

they slaughtered each other in confusion. It was a rout. Not one of Gideon's three hundred perished in the battle. God gave them more than they could handle to force them to rely wholly on him.

"God gives us more than we can handle to force us to rely wholly on him."

When we're confronted with an impossible situation or trial, Gideon's three hundred preach to us that "salvation . . . is from the Lord" (Psalm 37:39) and "if God is for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31). These are no domesticated platitudes. God really intends for us to cast our all on these massive truths and for them to give us more-than-conquerors confidence and peace (Romans 8:37), no matter what we face.

It is not hyperbole to say that the defeat of our sin that Jesus accomplished on the cross dwarfs Gideon's victory. Compared to overcoming God's wrath against our sin, defeating 100,000 Midianites was very small. And if God "did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things" (Romans 8:32)?

God certainly does give us more than we can handle. And he does it "to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead" (2 Corinthians 1:9). If you're facing some overwhelming adversary or adversity and you wonder how God could possibly deliver and work it for your good (Romans 8:28), then take heart. He is granting you the joy of experiencing the reality of Judges 7, Romans 8, and 2 Corinthians 1. ---- Jon Bloom