

July 2019

Born Again On The Fourth of July

By: David Mathis

For those of us in the States, the time is here again for our midsummer's patriotic respite.

For many, the Fourth of July means parades and picnics, hot dogs and Coca-Cola, ice cream and apple pie, baseball and bombs bursting in air. In God's good providence, the adoption of Jefferson's Declaration in 1776 happened during one of the best weather weeks of the year in this hemisphere. And so for 237 years now, the significance and seasonal timing of the day have conspired to make it a deeply rooted annual occasion in the American psyche.

While the Fourth's flood of Americana is all-too-enticing for many, it can rub many others the wrong way. But before thumbing our noses or diving in deep, it's good to pause to ask whether there's anything that makes the day different for an American follower of Jesus. Does being born again affect how we view the Fourth of July? Here are four layers of perspective for the Christian in contemplating the Fourth specifically, and human government in general.



Where Our Fundamental Identity Lies ~ First, let's be clear about where the Christian's deepest identity lies. If we are in Christ, joined to him by faith, all other pledges of allegiance have been relativized, whatever our nation of origin or naturalization. We still have our loyalties — they may even multiply — but none goes this deep. No man can ultimately serve both God and country. In Jesus, we have one final allegiance, and thus in this world we will always be, in some real sense, pilgrims, strangers and aliens, sojourners and exiles (1 Peter 2:11).

For the Christian, our citizenship in any nation aims to be "worthy of the gospel of Christ" (Philippians 1:27), not merely worthy of that political state. At the most basic level, "our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ," who will do for us what no political entity in this world will ever do — "transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself" (Philippians 3:20–21).

At the end of the day, we are the sons of God, not sons of Uncle Sam. The kings of the earth tax others, not their own sons (Matthew 17:25–26). Let your annual submission to the IRS be a friendly reminder that our fundamental identity is in God, not country.

Which means that as we Americans sing the anthem together and pledge allegiance side by side, and enjoy the parades and fireworks shoulder to shoulder, we create and strengthen ties that only go so far.

The blood of Jesus runs deeper than the blood that flows in defining or defending any nation. Our fellows in political liberty are important, but not as significant as our fellows in Jesus from every tribe and tongue. Yes, we seek to do good to our fellow Americans, but especially to those who are of the worldwide household of faith (Galatians 6:10).

Embracing God's Goodness in the Fatherland ~ Second, though our embrace of fatherland is relativized by our embrace of Jesus and his Father, it is good and healthy to have real affection for the nation we call our own. It is right for the Christian to be patriotic and reserve a special kind of love for city and country. In fact, it's a sign that something may be amiss spiritually if the Christian doesn't have some tempered but tangible sense of belonging to his fatherland. It's not only okay for American Christians to enjoy being American on the Fourth; it's commended.

God means for us to be appropriately enmeshed in this world (as Jesus prays in John 17, not of the world, but sent into it). Christ and country aren't irreconcilable. In Jesus's perfect arithmetic, there is space not only to render God our everything, but render to Caesar his share as well (Matthew 22:21–22).

Christians render respect to whom respect is owed, and honor to whom honor is owed (Romans 13:7). We acknowledge God's common goodness when our nation is manifestly "God's servant for your good" (Romans 13:4) and the authorities are "ministers of God" (Romans 13:6). "Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor" (1 Peter 2:17).

Genuine Gratitude for the Goodness ~ Third, it follows that as God's common goodness is manifested in our political state, we should be genuinely grateful. We give thanks when thanks is owed.

Perhaps we balk at being "proud to be an American" — and would prefer to be "humbled" by it. That's wise and good. And we need not make any such alteration to the call to be thankful.

Given the fallen condition of our world because of human sin, we should be amazed how much common goodness God continues to create and uphold in nations good and even bad. In the same breath Paul instructs Christians to be good citizens — "to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people" (Titus 3:1–2) — he also reminds us about our native condition:

For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy (Titus 3:3–5)

Given our depravity, and the diabolical desires that have a foothold in humanity for now, it is extraordinary mercy not only that any are saved at all, but also that any of our nations aren't in worse shape than they are. We betray the far-reaching effects of God's kindness when we're so consumed with frustrations about our homeland that we can't see many good things to be grateful for.

Taking Others to the True Country ~ Finally, for now, it continues to be legal to speak the gospel in public in these united states, and even to press for repentance and faith. This is a glorious liberty. Let's make the most of it while we can, remembering that we Christians have a true country, which will satisfy our inconsolable longing like no nation in the present can. And let's double our joy by bringing as many others with us as we can. It's hard to say it any better than C.S. Lewis:

If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world. If none of my earthly pleasures satisfy it, that does not prove that the universe is a fraud. Probably earthly pleasures were never meant to satisfy it, but only to arouse it, to suggest the real thing. If that is so, I must take care, on the one hand, never to despise, or to be unthankful for, these earthly blessings, and on the other, never to mistake them for something else of which they are only a kind of copy, or echo, or mirage.

I must keep alive in myself the desire for my true country, which I shall not find till after death; I must never let it get snowed under or turned aside; I must make it the main object of life to press on to that country and to help others to do the same.

If such a perspective would fly as the star-spangled banner over our Independence Day celebrations with family and friends, we might find them richer than ever.

Let's be profoundly grateful for the freedom we have in this country to recruit for the true one, and let's be unashamed to seize upon our fellow Americans' desire for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and show them in whom such joy is truly found.



We are still in need of a Dining Room Coordinator and a Kitchen Coordinator for our Ham, Turkey, Oyster Supper in November. We ask that you consider this opportunity to take on a leadership role in our church during our biggest fundraiser of the year. Please pray and ask for guidance to see if you are being called by the Lord to take on one of these roles. If you are interested in further information or if you have any questions or concerns, please see Sam Arnold or Karen Whitmer.

Lectionary Readings for July

July 7

2 Kings 5: 1-14
Psalm 30
Galatians 6: 1-16
Luke: 10: 1-11, 16-20

July 21

Amos 8: 1-12
Psalm 52
Colossians 1: 15-28
Luke: 10: 38-42

July 14

Amos 7: 7-17
Psalm 82
Colossians 1: 1-14
Luke: 10: 25-37

July 28

Hosea 1: 2-10
Psalm 85
Colossians 2: 6-15
Luke: 11: 1-13

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07-04-2014

AS CHRISTIANS WE ARE INDEPENDENT OF
EVIL AND AN ETERNITY OF PAIN AND
SUFFERING ... WHEN DO WE GET
FIREWORKS?

How Many States Can You Name?

Father William, the old priest, made it a practice to visit the parish school one day a week. He walked into the 4th grade class, where the children were studying the states, and asked them how many states they could name.

They came up with about 40 names. Father William jokingly told them that in his day students knew the names of all the states.

One lad raised his hand and said, 'Yes sir, but in those days there were only 13 states.'

Vacation Bible School 2019



Life is Wild but God is Good was the *Mane* Event for June. The children received Bible Buddies to take home each night that will help remind them in the days to come that when Life is *Unfair, Scary, Sad, Good,* and when it *Changes; that God is **always** Good!*

God's Goodness was shown to the children each night by all the leaders, station leaders and the special set that was built with them in mind.

We thank God for all those that shared His Goodness with our sweet little ones:

Roar Music: Alicia Copeland

Imagination Station: Blake and Linda McKibbin, Glenna Beard and Helen Morse

Wild Bible Adventure: Jennifer Strother, Karleigh Howdyshell, Darryl Deavers, George Taylor, Charles Wymer & Mitch Brensinger

Kid Vid: Corey Johnson and Cindy Deavers

Sports Stampede: Bianca Brensinger, Alec McLaren, Mitch Brensinger

Hungry Herd Cafe: Beth Howdyshell, Linda Howdyshell and Wanda Harding

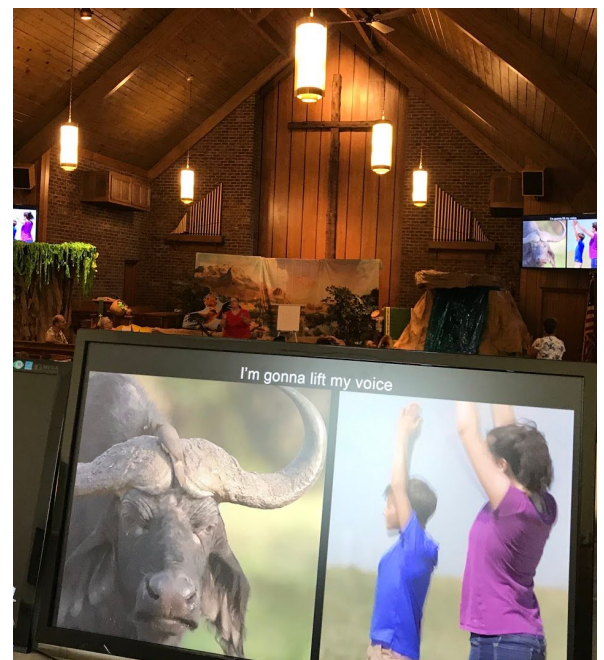
We received an offering each night that will go to help children in Africa to have clean drinking water. Mary Sheets and Julia Miller counted the money. The boys and girls competed to see which group could collect the most money. We are excited that both groups tied and the folks that attended on Friday night were also challenged to match that amount. The total is still growing, but as of Sunday, June 30th, we had collected over \$500.00!

We were kept on track each evening by Leon Sheets, ringing the bell for the teams to move from station to station. Linda Wheatley and Wanda Harding registered the following children:

Preschool Leaders: Cyndi Taylor, Chrissy Via, Pam and Dallas Vanlear with their kids:
Susie Hong and Noah Hong
Addie Van Lear
Aida Via and Issac Via

Crew 1 & 2 Leaders: Cheryl Bennett & Nathan Kutz with their kids:
Harlow Bennett and Lane Bennett
Aaron Kutz and Kenleigh Kutz

Crew 3 and 4 Leaders: Austine Belsky, Betty Stout and Mary Howdyshell with their kids:
Paxton O'Donohue
Tillie Harlow
Addison Shull
Avalyn Diehl and Ella Diehl
Tyler Miller
Henny and Katie Stevens
Hazel Fultz





Crew 5 and 6 Leaders: Gail Armstrong,
Diane Good and Joetta Walker with their kids:
Reagan Bailey
Susie Hong
Delaney Marshall
Reid Hill

Crew 7 and 8 Leaders: Samantha
Brensinger and Wendy McLaren with their
kids
Kandice Griffith
Corrina Griffith
Layla Taylor
Delilah Dameron
Wayne Brensinger
Russell Brensinger
Hailey Johnson

Crew 9 and 10 Leaders: Jarman Fretwell, Shelvie Critzer, Sharlene Booth, Jason & Kathy Via with their kids:
Sophia Belsky and Emma Via

The background set and decorations were provided by The United Methodist Men & Dallas Van Lear, president

Others that brought VBS to life for the kids were: Rob Riner, Mike and Betty Stout, Lauren Kelly, Richard and Tosha Ritchie, Naomi Ritchie, DJ Gibson, Savanna and Christian Arnold, Freddy Craig, Kevin Armstrong, Corey Johnson, Joetta and Jack Walker, the Brensinger family, Helen Morse, Karen Maugans, Iris Stout, Jeff Good, Sandy Wyrick and Corey Johnson, Susan Mehler, Roxanne Canipe

Bridge Christian Church

Ace Hardware in Stuarts Draft via Kim Maugans

Bruce Rogers provided donuts for the construction crew.

United Methodist Women, Little Debbie's, Sharp Shoppers and Martin's

Goody Bags: Linda and James Howdyshell, Wanda Harding, Phyllis Jarvis

African Candy Treats: Mrs Joan Wyrick

African Cookies: Katt Staton



**Thank You To Everyone One Helped Make Vacation Bible School 2019 ~ ROAR
A Huge Success For All Of The Children Of God!**

Vacation Bible School - ROAR 2019






BIRTHDAYS and
ANNIVERSARIES

1 - Kyle VanLear


3 - Stephanie Kerley

4 - C.J. Botkin
- Suzanne Lank
- Irene Morrison

6 -  Leon & Mary Sheets

7 - Ava Funk

8 - David Shiflett
- Jeffrey Walker



9 - Barbara Greene
- William Harding
- David Layman
-  Charles & Phyllis Fretwell

10 - Clara Breeding


12 - Louise McCray
- Nathan Selmon
- Natasha Ritchie
- Tuck Rogers

13 - Debbie Arnold

15 - Dakota Canipe
- Sharon Kile
- Hilda Painter

15 -  Hunter & Martha Black
-  Jerry & Susan Coffman

16 - Andrew Viers
- Jase Harding

17 - Theresa Humphries
-  John & Helen Morse

18 -  Will & Elizabeth Harding

20 - Heather Arndt

22 - Helen Stogdale

23 - Timothy Howdysshell
- Margie Selmon

26 - Cathy Lewis

27 - Becky Breeding

28 - Beth Howdysshell
- Mary Sheets
- Earl Wilberger

29 - Arlene Crist

31 - Julia Arndt
- Nancy Howdysshell

Upcoming Activities, Events and Meetings at New Hope UMC

July 2019

July 6, Saturday ~ Sweet Hour of Prayer @ 8:00am

July 7, Sunday ~ Sunday School @ 9:30am

~ Sunday Morning Worship & Holy Communion @ 10:30am

July 10, Wednesday ~ 'Whisper' Bible Study @ 6:00pm

July 11, Thursday ~ Hi-Noon meets at the church social hall for
a covered-dish picnic

July 13, Saturday ~ Sweet Hour of Prayer @ 8:00am

July 14, Sunday ~ Sunday School @ 9:30am

~ Sunday Morning Worship @ 10:30am

~ Planning Team Meeting @ 5:00pm

July 16, Tuesday ~ United Methodist Men Work Night @ 6:00pm

July 17, Wednesday ~ 'Whisper' Bible Study @ 6:00pm

July 18, Thursday ~ Singles With A Testimony (SWAT) Lunch at Ciro's
Pizza in Verona @ 12:00pm

July 20, Saturday ~ Sweet Hour of Prayer @ 8:00am

July 21, Sunday ~ Sunday School @ 9:30am

~ Sunday Morning Worship @ 10:30am

July 24, Wednesday ~ 'Whisper' Bible Study @ 6:00pm

July 25, Thursday ~ Church Council Meeting @ 6:30pm

July 26, Friday - June 28, Sunday ~ Mission Encounter at the
Smith Mountain Lake 4-H Center

July 27, Saturday ~ Sweet Hour of Prayer @ 8:00am

July 28, Sunday ~ Sunday School @ 9:30am

~ Sunday Morning Worship @ 10:30am

July 31, Wednesday ~ 'Whisper' Bible Study @ 6:00pm



We want to officially welcome our new pastor, Mike Reaves to New Hope UMC!

We look forward to your leadership and guidance as we take on new ventures and outreach ministries together in Christ.



Due to having Vacation Bible School - we did not have a Church Council Meeting in June. The next Church Council Meeting will be held on Thursday, July 25th @ 6:30pm. Please check back in next month's newsletter for the minutes to our July meeting.

Reminder:

All budget input is due from all committees before the Finance Committee meets again in August.

Please contact Kevin Armstrong for more information.





July is National UV Eye Health Month!

Take Care of Your Eyes Now For Good Vision Later In Life

Written By: Susanne Medeiros

You probably don't spend much time thinking about your eye health. But that is exactly what you should be doing to help preserve your vision. Most vision problems are preventable with simple good-health habits.

Vision loss is not an inevitable part of getting older. Many studies have shown that exercise and a diet rich in a variety of fruits and vegetables can protect against blinding eye diseases, such as age-related macular degeneration and glaucoma. But you can't wait until you're having problems with your vision to start taking care of your health.

The choices you make while you're healthy can also help prevent certain types of eye cancer, as well as work- and sports-related eye injuries. And regular eye exams can catch problems before it's too late. The American Academy of Ophthalmology recommends adults under age 40 have a comprehensive medical eye exam every five to 10 years.

Make these seven habits part of your daily life to set yourself up for a lifetime of seeing well:

- **Wear sunglasses** (even when it's cloudy). Long-term exposure to the sun without proper protection can increase the risk of eye disease, including cataracts, macular degeneration, growths on the eye, and a rare form of eye cancer. Wear sunglasses that block 99 to 100 percent of both UVA and UVB radiation.
- **Exercise.** Regular physical activity can protect you from serious eye diseases, such as age-related macular degeneration and glaucoma.
- **Stop smoking.** Smoking increases the risk for eye diseases such as cataracts and age-related macular degeneration. Smoking also raises the risk for cardiovascular diseases which can indirectly influence your eye health. Tobacco smoke, including second-hand smoke, also makes dry eye worse.
- **Protect your eyes at work and at play.** Every year, thousands of people in the United States get a serious work-related eye injury or sports-related eye injury. Wearing protective eyewear (safety glasses or goggles) can prevent most of these injuries. To make sure you have the right kind of protective eyewear and you're using it correctly, talk with your eyecare professional.
- **Be aware of eye fatigue.** If you spend a lot of time at the computer or staring at your phone, you may forget to blink — and that can tire out your eyes. Try using the 20–20–20 rule throughout the day: every 20 minutes, look away from the screen and focus about 20 feet in front of you for 20 seconds. Eye fatigue won't damage your vision, but if it persists, it can be a sign something else is wrong. You may have dry eye, presbyopia, or spectacles with lenses that are not properly centered.
- **Take proper care of contact lenses.** Sleeping, showering and swimming in contact lenses increases your risk for a potentially blinding eye infection. Learn how to properly care for contact lenses.
- **Know your family history.** Certain eye diseases can be inherited. If you have a close relative with macular degeneration, you have a 50% chance of developing this condition. A family history of glaucoma increases your glaucoma risk by four to nine times. Talk to family members about their eye conditions. Knowing what vision challenges your family has had can help you and your ophthalmologist evaluate your risk.

Kid's Corner ~ Gideon

by Sharla Guenther

The story of Gideon starts out with God not being very happy with his people, the Israelites. If you remember the Israelites were the ones God saved from Pharaoh. The people Moses led across the Red Sea on dry ground.

Hundreds of years had passed since then but throughout all of God's miracles they had experienced, they still did evil in the eyes of the Lord.

There were consequences for these actions. That means that when they did something wrong God didn't bless them but gave them into the hands of the Midianites.

The Midianites weren't their friends. They took or ruined all their crops and animals. The Israelites had to hide from them in caves.

After Israel had nothing left they finally cried out to God for help. God heard their cry (like he always does) and had a plan.

The cool thing about all this is that God wasn't happy with the Israelites but He still listened to them and answered their prayer!

This is where Gideon comes into the story. He was threshing wheat in a hidden place so that the Midianites wouldn't see him and steal the wheat, when an angel of the Lord came and sat next to him.

The angel spoke to him and said, "The Lord is with you, mighty warrior."

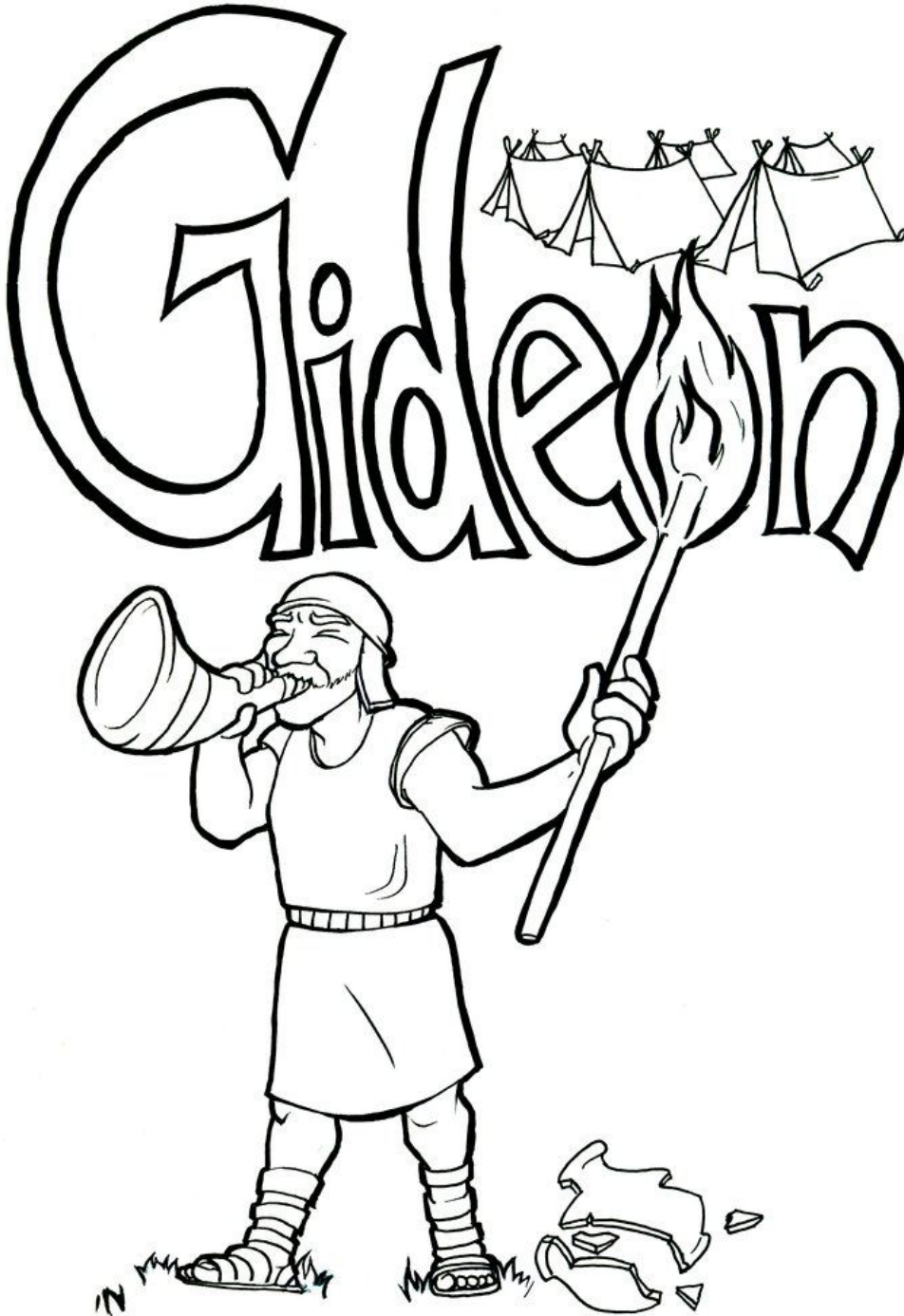
"But sir," Gideon replied, "if the Lord is with us why is all this bad stuff happening? Where are all the miracles our fathers (the people that crossed the Red Sea) told us about?"

The Lord replied to Gideon, "Go with all your strength and save Israel from the Midianites. I am sending you to do it."

Then Gideon started all the excuses. "But Lord, how can I save Israel? My people are the weakest in Manasseh and I am the smallest and the youngest in my family."

I think God probably smiled here, but He said "I will be with you, and you will defeat all the Midianites together."

Then Gideon asked God for a sign. He wanted to be sure this was really God that he was talking to. Gideon didn't have a Bible to follow and didn't know how or if God went around talking to people, he wanted to be sure.



First he prepared an altar as an offering for God. This was the way they gave gifts and ask for forgiveness to God before Jesus died on the cross. He set his offering (meat and unleavened bread) down on a rock and fire came from the rock completely consuming the meat and bread. And the angel of the Lord disappeared. Then Gideon realized that it was the angel of the Lord. That same night the Lord told Gideon to take down the altar his father had built for a pretend God (Baal) and to cut down an Asherah pole (this was made for another god people wanted to worship).

The Israelites had started believing in these fake gods and that's why God had been angry with them. He is the only real and true God and these people were praying and giving offerings to pieces of wood and statues that can't do or hear anything.

So Gideon took ten of his servants at night (because he was afraid of getting caught from the people in the town) and tore down the altars. The people were mad when they realized Gideon had wrecked their altars but they decided that if Baal was really a god he could punish Gideon. Of course nothing ever happened to Gideon because Baal isn't real.

Gideon still wanted to make sure that God would save the Israelites so he asked for another sign. He placed a piece of wool from a sheep on the ground. If there was dew only on the fleece and all the ground around it is dry, then he would know that God would save them.

When Gideon checked the wool in the morning it was soaking wet and the ground was dry. Still Gideon asked for one more sign... This time he asked that the fleece would be dry and the ground would be wet. Sure enough, the next morning it was just as Gideon asked.

So Gideon gathered up an army and started out for the Midianite camp. Gideon was probably feeling pretty good about things. He had lots of men to help him fight and God promised he would help them win.

God had something a little different in mind. He told Gideon he had too many men in his army. He knew that Israel would think they defeated the Midianites on their own without God's help.

So God said to Gideon, "Announce to the people, 'Anyone whose afraid may go home now'." Amazingly twenty-two thousand of the men left! That's a lot of people! More than half of the whole army went home. Only ten thousand stayed.

Gideon still felt alright. At least they had ten thousand men, right? Not for long. The Lord told Gideon he still had too many men. When they went down to the water for a drink the Lord told him, "Separate the men that drink the water like a dog and the ones that get on their knees and drink from their cupped hands."

I'm thinking this took quite a while with all those men but Gideon did it. It's surprising, but only three hundred men got on their knees and drank from their hands. All the rest looked silly drinking like dogs!

God told Gideon that he only wanted the three hundred men and the rest were supposed to go home. This way when they won, the Israelites would know that God was in control with only three hundred men left.

Gideon didn't know how God was going to help them win. There were so many Midianites against just three hundred of them so he worried and wasn't getting any sleep. So, God decided to help Gideon and make him feel better about things.

During the night the Lord spoke to Gideon, "If you are still afraid that I'm going to help you win, go down in the valley with your servant Purah where the Midianites are staying and listen to what they're saying. You'll feel much better after that."

Guess what Gideon did? He was still afraid and took Purah and snuck down to the Midianite camp. Just as he arrived he heard one of them talking to his friend about a dream he had. He was saying, "I dreamt that a round loaf of bread came rolling into our camp. It came so fast that it ran right into one of our tents and made it fall over." His friend responded, "This must mean the sword of Gideon and that God will help him defeat the Midianites."

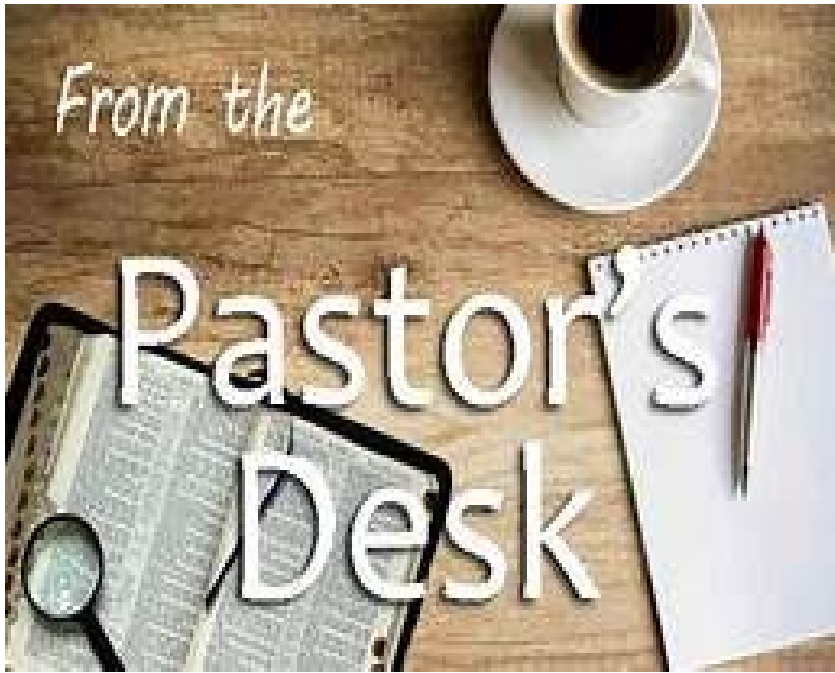
As soon as Gideon heard this he worshiped God and ran back to the camp. He returned and called out, "Get up, the Lord has given us the Midianite camp!" He divided all the men in three groups and gave them all trumpets and empty jars with torches inside.

Gideon and the men surrounded the camp in the three groups (remember they were up high looking down into the valley). When Gideon started to blow his trumpet the rest followed. They blew their trumpets and yelled, "For the Lord and for Gideon!" Then they broke the jars they were carrying, holding onto the torches with one hand and the trumpet in the other hand shouting, "A sword for the Lord and for Gideon!"

When the Midianites heard this they started yelling and running around. Then when all the trumpets started again the Lord caused the Midianites to start freaking out and they started to turn on each other with their swords.

The rest that got away were captured by the men of Ephraim by the Jordan because Gideon sent messengers ahead of them to let them know they were coming. That was the day God saved Gideon and defeated the Midianites. Without God none of this was possible. I hope that after this Gideon learned his lesson and stopped worrying. With God nothing is impossible!

Next time you're in a tough situation know that God can give you strength and he wants to help you. Just ask and He will!



From Pastor Mike's Desk

July 2019

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.

~ Genesis 1:1-2 (NRSV)

Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

~ Philippians 4:6-7 (NRSV)

Wow! It has been quite a week for all of us – Goodbye's, VBS, Hello's, Pastoral Transition and all the work that goes into each. There has been sadness, joy, and everything in between. Some of us can say there was a little chaos sprinkled in as well.

Chaos – disorder and confusion – is not something we normally welcome or want but chaos isn't necessarily a bad thing.

For one thing, without chaos there would be no order. Just think about this for a moment. How would you go about describing a neat or organized room to someone if there were no way to describe a chaotic or messy room? You need some way to compare or judge one thing against another. Fortunately, chaos is there to provide some much-needed context.

Chaos also helps you better appreciate order. Have you ever been to an event where people don't know where to go or what to do and the expectations are not clear? Under those circumstances people can get annoyed and unhappy.

Now, picture an entirely different event where things are running seamlessly: people know exactly where to go, and everyone is enjoying themselves. While you might take this second experience for granted, you will most certainly appreciate it much more having gone through something as chaotic as the first example.

As the saying goes, you don't know what you have, until it's gone. Chaos can help you find order.

How can chaos help you find or put things in order?

Take into consideration anything that is chaotic – a messy room, an overpacked schedule for example. There's a lot of different shapes, forms and information to look at and things don't seem to make much sense. As you start taking a closer look at what's in front of you, you recognize familiar items and begin looking for patterns. It's like when you go to a party and you scan a room for a familiar face. Once you find something familiar, you can start building on that and eventually create your own form of order. There is order amongst chaos, all you must do is keep a calm and keen eye and know that God is with you.

Working with thirty-five children in VBS can have moments of chaos. The chaos may exist in the extra demands on your time and energy. There is also that first night when the adults are learning their roles and all the children come together for the first time. Order emerges out of that chaos and each day things become more comfortable for adults and children alike.

At least, that has been my experience with VBS over the years, but strong leadership and organization can help lessen chaos. I certainly witnessed that here on Thursday and Friday night at VBS.

I also experienced some order out of chaos during our move to New Hope last Wednesday,

Our move got off to a rough start. The moving company cancelled on us the day before the truck was scheduled to show up. Susan and I were ready for the truck and we really needed to get out of the house so the church could prepare for the arrival of their new pastor. Talk about chaos!

The next morning, I called the two other moving companies. The first was booked solid. I called another company and they agreed to come the next day. Order was being restored!

Your patience, kindness, and generosity to me and Susan during this time has helped restore that order, too, which is more evidence of the leadership at New Hope and your commitment to discipleship. Thank you and please continue to pray for us as we move from chaos to order unpacking and organizing our new home as we settle in to our new appointed ministries at New Hope and Bethany Churches.

The creation story in Genesis teaches us the God created order out of the chaos. God does not want us to live in a state of chaos. God wants us to live in peace – a peace that surpasses all understanding. I have experienced God at work through your prayers and actions as order and peace is being restored.

As we move forward together in ministry, may we live fully into the peace that only God can provide.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Mike

*If you would like to add an article or announcement to the Hilltopper, please contact
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