

The Lord's Power

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How many people would you want to take into battle to fight 135,000 Midianites? The Lord's answer is 300, not what we would come up with. In week three of our *Growing Through Challenges* series we come to Gideon's preparation to fight the Midianites, and the Lord's selection of his soldiers.

Thirty-two thousand people had gathered to fight the Midianites, so they would have been outnumbered four to one. Imagine watching a football game where three players on one team lined up against twelve on the other side. We wouldn't even bother watching. Yet the Lord said, "The people who are with you are too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel claim glory for itself against Me, saying, 'My own hand has saved me.'" So He said anyone who was afraid should go home, according to the law in Deuteronomy (Dt 20:8). Twenty-two thousand left, so now they were outnumbered 13.5 to one. Think now of a football game with one player facing 13!

In this story the Lord is winnowing away fighters for them to have success. On a natural level we'd think more is better, but on a spiritual level it's about finding the affections and thoughts that invite the Lord in. When we face our inner demons, the fearful parts of us don't really believe the Lord will take care of us. They doubt and focus on the threat, and on pain and death. The 10,000 who stayed were the kind who would take the field outnumbered 13 to one, believing that the Lord was in charge.

Yet 13 to one was not a steep enough odds. The Lord had the soldiers go down to the water to drink, and only those who brought water to their mouths lapping like dogs were chosen - a mere 300. Going to the water is approaching the Lord's truth. Those who lapped like dogs are "those who have an appetite for truths, thus those who from some natural affection seek to know truths, a 'dog' symbolizing appetite and eagerness." (AE 455:9) You can picture a dog running up to its master, eager to play, or interact. The part of us that can fight against overwhelming odds is the part that is excited and eager to see and apply the Lord's truth. This is the part of us that would go into battle outnumbered 450 to one. Only the Lord could save a person in such circumstances.

The reason 300 could win is that evil has no power (DP 19, AE 783:2, 4). Our experience says the opposite. That is because evil has power only against evil and falsity in us. Since we are not perfect, it will at times hold sway. But if we can believe that evil in fact has no power, then we can turn to the Lord with confidence that obeying His truth will set us free.

Such a simple idea: The Lord's goodness and truth holds all power, and evil and falsity none. How can each of us turn to the Lord and His truth with our full hearts, and deny the lies that the hells tell us about their power. How can we allow the Lord to set us free?

Lessons: Judges 7:1-8, *Divine Providence* 19:1-2