

The Upper Room^[1] devotional reflection for Sunday, May 2, 2021 comes to us from Sandra Still of North Carolina

Judges 6:11-20 *11 The angel of the LORD came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites. 12 When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said, "The LORD is with you, mighty warrior." 13 "Pardon me, my lord," Gideon replied, "but if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our ancestors told us about when they said, 'Did not the LORD bring us up out of Egypt?' But now the LORD has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midian." 14 The LORD turned to him and said, "Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand. Am I not sending you?" 15 "Pardon me, my lord," Gideon replied, "but how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family." 16 The LORD answered, "I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites, leaving none alive." 17 Gideon replied, "If now I have found favor in your eyes, give me a sign that it is really you talking to me. 18 Please do not go away until I come back and bring my offering and set it before you." And the LORD said, "I will wait until you return." 19 Gideon went inside, prepared a young goat, and from an ephah of flour he made bread without yeast. Putting the meat in a basket and its broth in a pot, he brought them out and offered them to him under the oak. 20 The angel of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened bread, place them on this rock, and pour out the broth." And Gideon did so.*

"Why, God?"

As I write, the COVID-19 quarantine is in place, and my husband, who is in a skilled-nursing facility, is close to death. Thankfully, I was allowed in to see him one last time. Needless to say, life seems very difficult right now. Further, once he passes on, I know it will be too risky to even consider having friends and family gather to comfort and support me. I will be alone – and yet not alone. God is with me, though I must admit I occasionally share Gideon's sentiments. When I came upon that scripture during my daily quiet time, I laughed out loud.

I suspect I'm not the only believer who has asked this question in times of trial. Reassuringly, God didn't condemn Gideon but continually worked with him, increasing and building Gideon's faith. Gideon, to his credit, also went forward trusting God despite his doubts and thereby triumphed.

In times of doubt, we can feel free to be honest with God, knowing God understands. However, we can also bravely follow where God leads, trusting in spite of our fears.

Prayer Focus: Families unable to Gather in Time of Grief

Prayer: Dear Father, sustain us when we question you and have doubts about situations we do not understand. Give us the faith and courage to follow you anyway. Amen.

Thought for the Day: God understands my frailty and my fears.

--- Sandra Still

Friends –

Perhaps this pandemic could cause us to ask God the same question Gideon asked: "God, why is this happening to us?" Further, how can we be certain that the response we understand is truly the Voice of God?

Certainly, these are difficult questions. I don't believe that God has caused this awful situation, but I do believe that through God's unlimited loving grace, we are able to respond through service and science. I also believe that God grieves with us and wants the very best for each and all of us.

--Pastor bea

¹ <https://www.upperroom.org/>