

Mark 4:35-41  
“Victory God’s Way”  
23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday af. Pentecost (Proper 27)

November 12, 2017  
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church  
Rev. Brent Hartwig

Grace, Mercy, and Peace be unto you from Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior and God our Heavenly Father. Amen!

*[Opening Youth Skit]*

**Victory God’s Way**  
*Based on Judges 7 and Mark 4:35-41*

- Person 1: I don’t get it!
- Person 2: What?
- Person 1: The Old Testament and Gospel readings for this Sunday.
- Person 2: Oh, the story about Gideon! God has him do all those crazy things.
- Person 3: Like what?
- Person 4: He tells him to seemingly use random criteria to pare down his already undersized army of 32,000 down to 300, and then attack a huge Midianite army using the remaining 1 percent with jars, trumpets, and torches.
- Person 5: Oh yeah, and then they like rout the enemy.
- Person 3: And it says God spoke to Gideon. But how?
- Person 1: Well, if God was talking to me, He’d probably use Facebook or a cell phone.
- Person 3: Right.
- Person 2: What about the Gospel reading when Jesus calms the storm because His disciples were afraid?
- Person 5: Did you ever wonder what it would be like to be one of Jesus’ original disciples?
- Person 1: Hmm. I wonder...what *would* it be like to be one of Jesus’ original disciples or Gideon?... (dream transition music)
- Narrator: Today, we view two Biblical events, separated by 1100 years, but united by our timeless God. (*Pause & point to Gideon.*) Welcome to the 12<sup>th</sup> century BC, we’re at the Israelite camp at the foot of Mount Gilboa and across the valley is the Midianite camp. We begin over a thousand years before Christ. One Israelite Judge named Gideon was preparing his army for battle, when he received a rather strange call on his cell phone from his supreme commander. (*Pause.*) Now I know you are thinking, “Gideon

took a call on his cell phone?" Yes, I thought it was funny too, but remember: texting hadn't been invented yet.

Gideon: *(Ring tone. Picks up his cell phone.)* Hello, Israelite Base Camp. How may I direct your call? *(Pause.)* Oh, no, sorry LORD. No, don't hang up. Yes, this is Gideon. I just wasn't expecting your call. *(Pause.)* What's that? *(Pause.)* You say you've been going over my plans for the assault on the Midianites, and you have a few changes we need to make? Well, you're the boss, sir. Go right ahead. *(Pause.)* Hmm...I don't think I'm hearing you correctly sir. Our connection must be cutting out. You know, those crazy Philistines just won't leave the cell towers alone. *(Pause.)* You say we have too many troops for the battle? Ah...well...it's just I thought that maybe that was a GOOD thing, LORD. *(Pause.)* It's not? It's a bad idea? Correct me if I'm wrong, but I believe we're outnumbered 4 to 1 already. *(Pause.)* You say you want me to ask who is afraid of battle, and let them go home? *(Pause.)* Who is this really?

Narrator: Some eleven hundred years later, we see the Son of the living God, Jesus the Christ. He just finished preaching to a packed audience on the edge of the Sea of Galilee. Preaching from a boat, anchored off the shore, Jesus tells the parable of the Mustard Seed, and then announces a change of plans to his roadies...in those days known as disciples.

Jesus: *(Preaching to the crowd.)* Yet when it is sown, it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and puts out large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade! *(Jesus turns to disciples.)* Okay, guys, did you understand the meaning of this parable? Oh well, I'll explain it later. *(Pause)* It's getting late. Change of plans. We're setting out for the other side of the lake on this boat. *(Jesus lays down in back of boat. Disciples sit in front.)*

Narrator: Little did the disciples know that their boat ride was about to turn into a 3 hour tour that would be a real source of fear for them – Meanwhile, back at the Israelite Base Camp with General Gideon...

Gideon: *(Ring tone. Picks up his cell phone.)* Hello, Israelite Base Camp. *(Pause.)* Yes, this is Gideon. *(Pause.)* Yes, I did just as you advised. We dismissed all the men who were fearful and trembling. My commanders tell me we have a little problem. You see, two-thirds of them took the offer and we're down to 10,000 troops. But I can call them back if you want...*(Pause.)* Yes, I understand that fear—apart from the fear of you—is the flipside of faith and has no business in the lives of your people. *(Pause.)* And you say pride in ourselves—rather than in you—must have no part in our lives either. Lord, I just have one problem...everyone thinks I'm nuts...

Narrator: Fast forward to the disciples' boat ride with Jesus on the Sea of Galilee, which is notorious for sudden, violent storms. Jesus falls asleep on a

cushion in the stern, the only story in the gospels where Jesus does. Meanwhile, a storm arose and became so violent that the Boat, the SS Minnow, began to fill with water. (*Wind noises & rain stick.*)

Thomas: So, he takes us out on the water, falls asleep in the boat, and lets us drown in a sinking boat? This makes no sense!

James: Certainly this isn't God's will!

Andrew: We must wake him.

Peter: I'm not waking him. You heard what the narrator said. The man needs his sleep! You wake him, Andrew!

Andrew: (*Tries to get John's attention.*) John! John! You wake him. You're the one who Jesus loves!

John: (*John turns to Andrew.*) All you need is love, man.

James: Here, let's draw straws...long one wakes the LORD.

(*Disciples draw straws and Peter loses, and then tries to bend his straw to make it shorter.*)

Peter: Lord, wake up.

John: Save us Lord. We're perishing.

Narrator: And just like that, Jesus awoke and rebuked the wind and the sea.

Jesus: Peace. (*Jesus puts hand up, palm facing out. Wind stops.*) Be still. (*Hand motion. The disciples keep rocking, so Jesus turns to them.*) I said, be still.

Disciples: (*In unison.*) Oh, right. (*They stop rocking.*)

Narrator: And he rebuked the disciples with two questions—nine words--that exposed their issues, the same issues God addressed some 1100 years earlier with Gideon and his men: fear and faith.

Jesus: Why are you so afraid? Have you no faith?

Narrator: Meanwhile, back at the Israelite Base Camp with General Gideon...

Gideon: (*Ring tone. Picks up his cell phone.*) Captain Underpants. How may I help you? (*Pause.*) No, seriously, that's what all my commanders are calling me now. (*Pause.*) Well you see, LORD, per your directions I further reduced the size of our army based on their drinking manners. (*Pause.*) Yes, we're down to 300 men, each equipped with torches, trumpets, and jars, just as you said.

Narrator 1: Back at the Sea of Galilee, we pick up the thoughts of Jesus' followers...

Thomas: Who, then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?

Peter: He commands the wind...

James: He commands the sea...

John: He drives out fear....

Andrew: He is the source of faith...

Narrator: And, concluding our story with Gideon...

Gideon: *(Ring tone. Picks up his cell phone.)* Israelite Base Camp, how may I direct your call? *(Pause.)* Oh, hello LORD. *(Pause.)* Oh, the attack on the Midianites? Yes, You gave them into our hands just as you said. We split into three parties, snuck up on the enemy camp at night right after a change of guards, blew the trumpets, broke the jars, held the torches high, and chanted in unison at the top of our lungs. *(Pause.)* Because of you the Midianites panicked, turned on one-another, and fled. I called out for reinforcements and we pursued them. *(Pause.)* What's that? Yes. Victory your way. Not my will, but your's be done.

Narrator: As Gideon and the disciples learned God has a better plan. May Thy Will Be Done! Amen!

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Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

Two different events. Seemingly so different, and yet so much the same.

Separated by 1100 years

you have the account of Gideon the Old Testament judge	and you have the New Testament account of Jesus calming the storm – Silence.
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***“Be still and know that I am God.”*** (Psalm 46:10)

In both of these accounts the miraculous of God was demonstrated.

In the Gideon account – God proved he is in control, he fights the battle.

In the Disciples account – God proved he is in control, he commands all of nature.

In both of these accounts you see the miracles of God.

But in both of these accounts you also see the sanctified life.

Gideon was saved by God.  
The disciples were saved by God.  
We are saved by God.

Through the death and through the resurrection of Jesus Christ  
we are justified, declared innocent, not guilty,  
we are redeemed and bought back from the enemy  
from sin, death and the devil  
to belong to God.

Gideon did nothing to be saved.  
The disciples did nothing to be saved.  
We do nothing to be saved.  
It is done – all done for us through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.  
In Jesus we are righteous – it is passive righteousness.  
This is the gracious and good will of God – Thy will be done!

Just as... Gideon was saved by God.  
The disciples were saved by God.  
We are saved by God.

Now saved by God  
Gideon lived for God  
The disciples lived for God.  
We live for God

This is active righteousness – we must do something and something we do.

St. Paul said... ***“For I do not understand my own actions.  
For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.”*** (Romans 7:15)

Sins of omission. Sins of commission.  
Like our father Adam and our mother Eve, we rebel.

That is the first R – Rebel. Through our sin, through our idolatry we rebel.

And as a result there is a retribution. That is the next R – Retribution.

Sin comes with consequences.  
And with sin there is only two choices – run away from God or run towards God.

And we run towards God. We confess our sin. I a poor, miserable sinner.

We repent. That is the next R – Repentance.

As a result – God forgives us. He forgives our sins of omission and our sins of commission. He completely forgives us. He rescues us.

That is the next R – rescue.

As rescue people of God we have rest. That is the final R – rest.

This cycle of Rebel – Retribution – Repentance – Rescue – and Rest...

This cycle is the sanctified life. Our sanctified life. Faith and fear – fear and faith.

So live a life of repentance and know the rescue and rest of our God.

This is the will of God. They will be done. Amen!

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“Now may the God of peace... equip you with everything good that you may do his will, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.” (Heb 13:20-21)

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