

Gideon and the crackpots

For first campfire talk Cornerstone 8-22-00

God loves you! Jesus is proof of that. He came to show you how much God cares about you. He loves you so much He sent his only Son to die in your place. If Jesus could appear right now – manifest himself to you physically – you could look in his eyes and see that love He has for you. But those of you who know Him as your Savior can look right into his eyes, for his Spirit is in you, and the Spirit tells you how much you are loved, when you will listen.

Some of you aren't sure of that because life has dealt you some tough things and you can't understand how God could love you and allow those things to happen. Please understand this, Satan comes to kill, steal, and destroy. You know what he would like to do is to have you blame God for his actions. That is called deception. The truth is God hurts with you through every pain and every struggle. That is why He sent his son, so that the destructiveness of sin (rebellion against God) could end in your life. The psalmist said God walks through my difficulty before me even though I can't see his feet prints and he holds my right hand.

In that love He has for you personally, He sent you here to Cornerstone. Think how many young people there are in the Verde Valley. And He chose 40, just 40 out of all of them to come and be a part of this school where He is the Lord, the director, where you can really grow in Him. Do you know the story of Gideon's men? I often wondered how special those men felt to be picked out of the thousands to be the warriors to stand against the vast army. You are kind of like that. The world has its godless education that promotes self. What could Gideon have done with that army against that huge alliance of armies? I'll tell you what – die. But when he let God do things his way, the numbers were small but the power was God's.

²⁶ Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth.²⁷ But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.

²⁸ He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things--and the things that are not--to nullify the things that are,²⁹ so that no one may boast before him.³⁰ It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God--that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.

³¹ Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord."

1 Cor 1:26-31 (NIV)

One thing you will learn by God's grace at Cornerstone is the reason you are special. Christ in you! He picked you to express his life through. Now you look

around at this group of people and you think – yeah right? But that is how God gets all the glory. When we are weak He is strong. When you are broken, He is your strength. I'm sure that little army Gideon was told to take into battle, only a portion of the men that volunteered, looked at each other and then looked at the vast army in the valley, and they wondered the same thing. Us defeat them, yeah right!

But then the Lord gave them His plan. Take clay jars or pots and put a torch in it. Bring along a trumpet. They surrounded that vast army in the middle of the night, and on cue, they broke the pots so their torches shown, and they blew their trumpets and yelled, "For the Lord and for Gideon". God threw that army into chaos and they killed each other in the confusion. As they fled the three hundred followed.

That is the same plan God has today. He chose you out of all the students of the Verde Valley to be here and the battle plan is the same. You have a light in you, the Lord God of heaven and earth, Jesus the Christ. It is a treasure in an earthen vessel, a jar- your physical self. The enemy is fear, doubt, discouragement, and all things that are not of God. When our lives are broken, and by that I mean we learn to rely on Jesus and not our own ability, the torch that is the light of His life in you shines brightly. The enemy flees. And we speak the truth like the blast of a trumpet. They had a yell when they went into battle, "For the Lord and for Gideon!" You are going into battle too! "Crack pots, for Jesus!"

You may think that sounds funny, but it causes the enemies knees to knock. You know why? He's not afraid of you. You are no match for him. But Jesus in you scares him spitless. When you are relying on Jesus he doesn't stand a chance. Crack pots! For Jesus!

Now it would be a nice little story to end right there. But you know what, it is just getting started. That little band of 300 went after 15,000 swordsmen survivors and attacked. Let's see, Jean – how many is that per man? 50! How would you like to take on 50 at once? But wait – it wasn't them, the Lord was fighting for them. But the word uses a little word here that we don't like to read. It says they were exhausted. Yes, the Lord won, but not because they were in top form. It was because the Lord never tires. You may get tired this year, with homework and tests and studying but the Lord is shaping you. You may have challenges this year, you may be coming already in a challenge. In this story after it says they were exhausted it says they crossed over the Jordan. That is a picture of dying to our own ways. It is not I that lives but Christ that lives in me.

They went to others for help and no one would help. You may face that too because the Lord wants you to know His help is enough. His life in you is

enough. As long as you are a CRACK POT – For Jesus! So during this year if you find yourself losing the battle you need to ask yourself if you are letting the life of Christ in you fight or if you are trying to do it on your own.

Just like those chosen men had a tough time, God will allow you to have a tough time. Why? Because He doesn't care? NO! It is because He does and He wants to keep showing you how your needs are met in Jesus! How He can be your Strength, your Joy, your Peace. He is showing you the Light He can be to others in your difficulty. He is growing you into a man or woman of God that can be a crack pot to change the world around them with His very life in you.

Now that is the highest calling a person could have. President is a powerful position, a crack pot is more life changing. A CEO wields a lot of power, but a crack pot that lets the life of Christ through them operates in the Strength of Almighty God, the maker of heaven and earth.

Your teachers gathered and dedicated themselves to serving you this year, to help you in your growth. That is our expression of being crackpot teachers. I am going to ask you to dedicate yourself to Jesus afresh. Will you dedicate yourself this year to being the student God wants you to be, so his light can shine through you? His love picked you out and placed you in Cornerstone. What will your response be? Will you say – Yes Lord, I will be your crack pot, I will learn what you want me to learn, I will let your life in me shine out to a dark world. When it gets tough I will let your life meet the need in me. Will you do that? Because of the awesome love He displayed on the cross for you, will you this year be the student God wants you to be? Will you let Him shape you into the man or woman of God He plans for you to be?

You have another choice. Just be a pot without any light shining out. Yuck! Meet every struggle in your own strength. Be defeated and discouraged. But I don't think you want that because God brought you here. It was no chance your parents chose Cornerstone. Are you up to the challenge?

Repentance – dedication - praise