

MANY OR FEW

“Nothing can hinder the Lord from saving, whether by many or by few.” (1 Sam. 14:6)

It is important to remember that the majority of people have always been wrong. When someone asked Jesus: **“Lord, are only a few people going to be saved? He said unto them, ‘Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to.’” (Lk. 13:23-24)** Matthew records a similar statement by Jesus: **“Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow is the road that leads to life and only a few find it.” (Matt. 7:13-14)**

Corinth was a cesspool of corruption and immorality. Thus Paul warned the Corinthians: **“Do not deceive yourselves. If any one of you thinks he is wise by the standards of this age, he should become a fool so that me may become wise.” (1 Cor. 3:18)** The only way to be saved in Corinth was to dare to be different. Paul wrote: **“Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.” (2 Cor. 6:17-18)**

The same is true of us! If we want to be saved we must dare to be different!

JONATHAN ATTACKED THE PHILISTINES

Jonathan was the son of King Saul. In those difficult days the people of God were being oppressed by the Philistines. The Philistines did not allow one blacksmith in the whole land of Israel for fear that they would make weapons. Therefore, if the Hebrews wanted their plowshares and tools sharpened they had to go down to the Philistines to have it done (1 Sam. 13:19-21). Because of this, not one soldier in the Hebrew army had a sword or spear except King Saul and his son Jonathan (1 Sam. 13:22)

“One day Jonathan son of Saul said to his young armor-bearer, “Come, let’s go over to the Philistine outpost on the other side.” But he did not tell his father.” (1 Sam. 14:1)

The Philistines were on the top of two cliffs. One was called “Bozez” and the other “Seneh”. **“Jonathan said to his young armor-bearer, “Come, let’s go over to the outpost of those uncircumcised men. Perhaps the Lord will act in our behalf. Nothing can hinder the Lord from saving, whether by many or by few.” (2 Sam. 14:6)**

“Jonathan said, “Come on, then; we will cross over toward them and let them see us. If they say to us, ‘Wait there until we come to you,’ we will stay where we are and not go up to them. But if they say, ‘Come up to us,’ we will climb up, because that will be our sign that the Lord has given them into our hands.” (2 Sam. 14:8-10)

When Jonathan and his armor bearer showed themselves the Philistines said: **“Come up to us and we’ll teach you a lesson.”** So Jonathan said to his armor-bearer, **“Climb up after me; the Lord has given them into the hand of Israel.”** Jonathan climbed up, using his hands and feet, with his armor-bearer right behind him. The Philistines fell before Jonathan, and his armor-

bearer followed and killed behind him. In that first attack Jonathan and his armor-bearer killed some twenty men in an area of about half an acre. Then panic struck the whole army—those in the camp and field, and those in the outposts and raiding parties—and the ground shook. It was a panic sent by God.” (2 Sam. 14:12-15)

With only two soldiers attacking the Philistines God gave them a great victory: **“Those Hebrews who had previously been with the Philistines and had gone up with them to their camp went over to the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan. When all the Israelites who had hidden in the hill country of Ephraim heard that the Philistines were on the run, they joined the battle in hot pursuit. So on that day the Lord saved Israel, and the battle moved on beyond Beth Aven.” (2 Sam. 14:21-23)**

Yes! **“Nothing can hinder the Lord from saving, whether by many or by few.”**

NOAH

In the days of Noah **“The Lord saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. The Lord regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled. So the Lord said, “I will wipe from the face of the earth the human race I have created—and with them the animals, the birds and the creatures that move along the ground—for I regret that I have made them.” But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.” (Gen. 6:5-8)**

- Noah was a preacher of righteousness (2 Pet. 2:5).
- Noah dared to be different!
- He built an ark to save his family (Heb. 11:7).
- “Few”, only 8 people were saved on the ark (1 Pet. 3:20).
- The road that leads to life is narrow and only a few will find it!

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ABRAHAM

- **“The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was still in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran. ‘Leave your country and your people,’ God said, and go to the land I will show you.” (Acts 7:2-3).**
- Abraham came from a family of idolators: **“Joshua said to all the people ‘This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: Long ago your forefathers, including Terah the father of Abraham and Nahor, lived beyond the river and worshiped other gods.” (Josh. 24:2)**
- God therefore wanted Abraham to get away from his idolatrous family and **“The Lord said to Abram, ‘Leave your country, your people, and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you.” (Gen. 12:1)**
- Abraham did leave his country, but he did not immediately leave his family. He took his father, Terah, and his nephew Lot, with him and dwelt in Haran. Stephen explained: **“So he left the land of the Chaldeans and settled in Haran. After the death of his father, God sent him to this land where you are now living.” (Acts 7:4)**

- Death had separated Abraham from his father, but not from Lot: **“So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Haran. He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there.” (Gen. 12:4-5)**
- God wanted Abraham to be alone. God wanted him to be separated from the influence of his pagan family.
- Perhaps Abraham didn’t fully understand this, but God finally separated Abraham from Lot because their herdsmen were quarreling over pasture. Abraham graciously allowed Lot to choose where he wanted to live and he would live somewhere else. Lot saw that the whole plain of the Jordan was well watered like the garden of the Lord, and pitched his tent toward Sodom.
- Thus they parted ways. Lot chose a location that made him rich, and Abraham lived in the uninviting hill country where he became spiritual. (Gen. 13:7-13).
- It is interesting to note that Lot lost all of his earthly possessions when God destroyed Sodom (Gen. 19:12-29)
- Finally, Abraham was now alone! Now God was free to make a special promise to Abraham. Please note that this promise came “after” Abraham was separated from Lot: **“The Lord said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, “Look around from where you are, to the north and south, to the east and west. All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted. Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you.”**
- Today: **“If you belong to Christ, then are you Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” (Gal. 3:29)**

Yes! **“Nothing can hinder the Lord from saving, whether by many or by few.”** Sometimes God calls us to work for him alone!

GIDEON

After giving the Ten Commandments Moses instructed Israel: **“If you make an altar of stones for me, do not build it with dressed stones, for you will defile it if you use a tool on it.” (Ex. 20:25)** One reason for this prohibition involves man’s tendency to worship himself. If we used a tool to decorate an altar to God we would be constantly distracted by the temptation to admire our own cleverness and ability. God is a Jealous God and nothing is to distract from our focus on him!

The most important commandment in the Bible is to **“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.” (Mk. 12:30)** Nothing is to distract us from glorifying God!

The story of Gideon helps us to understand this principle!

In the days of Gideon the Midianites were oppressing the people of God. **“They camped on the land and ruined the crops all the way to Gaza and did not spare a living thing for Israel, neither sheep nor cattle nor donkeys. They came up with their livestock and their tents like swarms of locusts. It was impossible to count them or their camels; they invaded the land to**

ravage it. Midian so impoverished the Israelites that they cried out to the Lord for help.” (Jud. 6:4-6)

The Lord chose Gideon to rescue his people from the Midianites and said to him: **“Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian’s hand. Am I not sending you?”** **“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.”** The Lord answered, **“I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites, leaving none alive.”** (Jud. 6:14-16)

- After receiving a series of signs Gideon was convinced that God was calling him to defeat the Midianites (Jud. 6:36-40).
- So Gideon assembled 32,000 soldiers at the spring of Harod, and the Midianites were north of them in the valley near the hill of Moreh (Jud. 7:1).
- **“The Lord said to Gideon, “You have too many men. I cannot deliver Midian into their hands, or Israel would boast against me. My own strength has saved me.” Now announce to the army, ‘Anyone who trembles with fear may turn back and leave Mount Gilead.’”** So twenty-two thousand men left, while ten thousand remained.”
- **“But the Lord said to Gideon, “There are still too many men. Take them down to the water, and I will thin them out for you there. If I say, ‘This one shall go with you,’ he shall go; but if I say, ‘This one shall not go with you,’ he shall not go.”** So Gideon took the men down to the water. There the Lord told him, **“Separate those who lap the water with their tongues as a dog laps from those who kneel down to drink.”** Three hundred of them drank from cupped hands, lapping like dogs. All the rest got down on their knees to drink. The Lord said to Gideon, **“With the three hundred men that lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hands. Let all the others go home.”**
- The men who got down on their knees were not vigilant! With their faces in the water they were unable to watch for the enemy. The men who cupped their hands could watch at the same time they were drinking! God uses those who are vigilant!
- There were 135,000 soldiers in the army of the Midianites (Jud. 8:10).
- Gideon defeated them all with only vigilant 300 soldiers.

Yes! **“Nothing can hinder the Lord from saving, whether by many or by few.”**

GOD IS THE KEY TO VICTORY!

Before going into battle David consistently inquired of the Lord. David knew that with the help of God he could not lose, and without the help of God he could not win. Here are 9 examples of David inquiring of the Lord: (1) 1 Sam. 23:1-3 (2) 1 Sam. 23:4-5 (3) 1 Sam. 23:10-11 (4) 1 Sam. 23:12-14 (5) 1 Sam. 30:8-9 (6) 2 Sam. 2:1-2 (7) 2 Sam. 5:17-21 (8) 2 Sam. 5:22-25 (9) 2 Sam. 21:1.

This is a good example for everyone! **“Now listen, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.”** Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, **“If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that.”** As it is, you boast in your arrogant schemes. All such boasting is evil. If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn’t do it, it is sin for them.” (James 4:13-17)

Before doing anything, we need to consider the will of God! Once we are convinced that what we are doing is the will of God, we are more than conquerors through him who loved us (Rom. 8:37). In other words: **“If God is for us, who can be against us?” (Rom. 8:31)**

Many of our Hispanic brethren use the expression “estamos arando” when greeted by a fellow believer. The expression means “we are plowing.” The story behind the greeting comes from a fly that was riding on the horn of a gigantic ox. Someone asked the fly what was going on and he replied “estamos arando.” We are laborers together with God, but without God we can accomplish nothing. One man plants, and another waters, but it is God who gives the increase (1 Cor. 3:5-9).

Even Jesus depended upon God. Jesus said:

- **“I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees the Father doing, because whatever the Father does, the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does.” (John 5:19)**
- **“For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.” (John 6:38)**
- **“Jesus said, ‘When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am the one I claim to be, and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me.’ (John 8:28)**
- **“For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it.” (John 12:49)**
- **“Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words that I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father who is living in me is doing his work.” (John 14:10)**
- **“But the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me.” (John 14:31)**
- **“If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.” (John 15:10)**
- **“I gave them the words you gave me and they have accepted them.” (John 17:8)**
- **“Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in the” (John 17:25-26)**
- **“And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will.” (Matt. 26:39)**
- **JESUS GAINED THE VICTORY BY DOING WHAT THE FATHER WANTED HIM TO DO! WE CAN ALSO GAIN THE VICTORY IN THE SAME WAY!**

THE POWER OF THE RESURRECTION

Jesus set an example for us!

■ **“To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.” (1 Pet. 2:21)**

■ When Jesus washed his disciples feet he said: **“You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you.” (John 13:13-16)**

■ Paul wrote: **“Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.” (1 Cor. 11:1)**

■ To the Ephesians Paul wrote: **“Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.” (Eph. 5:1-2)**

■ To the Colossians: **“bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.” (Col. 3:13)**

■ Obviously there are many ways that God expects us to be like Jesus!

In order to enable us to be like Jesus God has made available to us the same power that raised Jesus from the dead. Please prayerfully consider this Scripture:

“For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God’s people, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.” (Eph. 1:15-21)

Here are some of the things Paul prayed for:

1 - **“that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.”**

2 - **“that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you.”**

3 – That they might also know **“the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people”**

4 – And also know **“his incomparably great power for us who believe.”**

5 – Paul then explained **“That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms.”**

Yes! When you have resurrection power you can be confident that **“Nothing can hinder the Lord from saving, whether by many or by few.”**

GOD IS AN EVER PRESENT HELP IN TROUBLE

Hezekiah was the son of Ahaz and the 13th king of Judah. His name in Hebrew means “Yahweh is my strength”. He was an ancestor of Jesus (Matt. 1:9-10), and **“There was no one like him among all the kings of Judah, either before him or after him. (2 Ki. 18:5)**

After the death of the Assyrian king, Sargon II in 705 BC, his son Sennacherib became the king of Assyria. In 703 BC, Sennacherib began a series of major campaigns to quash opposition to Assyrian rule. Sennacherib sent this message to Hezekiah: **“Say to Hezekiah king of Judah: Do not let the god you depend on deceive you when he says, ‘Jerusalem will not be given into the hands of the king of Assyria.’ Surely you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all the countries, destroying them completely. And will you be delivered? Did the gods of the nations that were destroyed by my predecessors deliver them—the gods of Gozan, Harran, Rezeph and the people of Eden who were in Tel Assar? Where is the king of Hamath or the king of Arpad? Where are the kings of Lair, Sepharvaim, Hena and Ivvah?” (2 Ki. 19:10-13)**

The Assyrians were so powerful that their field commander said to Hezekiah: **“Come now, make a bargain with my master, the king of Assyria: I will give you two thousand horses – if you can put riders on them.” (2 Ki. 18:23)** This same arrogant commander warned that the Jews would soon be eating their own filth and drinking their own urine (2 Ki. 18:27). **“Then the commander stood and called out in Hebrew, “Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria! This is what the king says: Do not let Hezekiah deceive you. He cannot deliver you from my hand. Do not let Hezekiah persuade you to trust in the Lord when he says, ‘The Lord will surely deliver us; this city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.’ “Do not listen to Hezekiah. This is what the king of Assyria says: Make peace with me and come out to me. Then each of you will eat fruit from your own vine and fig tree and drink water from your own cistern, until I come and take you to a land like your own—a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of olive trees and honey. Choose life and not death! “Do not listen to Hezekiah, for he is misleading you when he says, ‘The Lord will deliver us.’” (2 Ki. 18:28-32)**

Sennacherib wrote these warnings in a letter and sent them to Hezekiah. **“Hezekiah received the letter from the messengers and read it. Then he went up to the temple of the Lord and spread it out before the Lord. And Hezekiah prayed to the Lord: “Lord, the God of Israel, enthroned between the cherubim, you alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. Give ear, Lord, and hear; open your eyes, Lord, and see; listen to the words Sennacherib has sent to ridicule the living God. “It is true, Lord, that the Assyrian kings have laid waste these nations and their lands. They have thrown their gods into the fire and destroyed them, for they were not gods but only wood and stone, fashioned by human hands. Now, Lord our God, deliver us from his hand, so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you alone, Lord, are God.”**

Isaiah gave this message to Hezekiah: **“Therefore this is what the Lord says concerning the king of Assyria: ‘He will not enter this city or shoot an arrow here. He will not come before it with shield or build a siege ramp against it. By the way that he came he will return; he will not enter this city, declares the Lord. I will defend this city and save it, for my sake and for the sake of David my servant.’”**

This remarkable story is so important that it is found three times in the Bible: 2 Kings 18:17-19:37; 2 Chron. 32:1-23; and Isaiah 36:1 – 37:38. Hezekiah had to make a decision, and so do we. Are we going to trust in God or not? Fortunately, Hezekiah trusted in God!

“That night the angel of the Lord went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up the next morning—there were all the dead bodies! So Sennacherib king of Assyria broke camp and withdrew. He returned to Nineveh and stayed there.” (2 Kings 19:35-36)

It is believed that Hezekiah’s deliverance inspired the 46th Psalm. That psalm begins with this promise: **“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.” (Ps. 46:1-3)**

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WE WILL TRUST IN THE LORD!

“Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God.” (Ps. 20:7)

Remember! **“What is impossible with men is possible with God” (Lk. 18:27)**

“For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.” (Eph. 3:14-21)

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