

CNL Season 2009
8.2 Jehovah Nissi pt 2
Transcription

Let's read this together, Judges, 7: 6-7. "And the number of them lapped, putting their hand to their mouth were three hundred men; but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water. And the Lord said unto Gideon, 'By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into your hand...'" I'll just give you a quick synopsis: Gideon is a man who God calls. Now when he calls Gideon — Gideon is a little terrified, we know the whole story -- and he hides behind the winepress and God says I want you to go ahead and conquer the Midianites. He goes, you've got to be kidding me, the Midianites are like tens of thousands of these guys. They're like all over the place. They're very powerful. They're warriors and everything else. Are you really talking to me? And God says, yeah, I'm talking to you.

So what ends up is he says, okay, I'm going to call some Israelites out to fight the battle. Well, a bunch of them get called out and God says, now, I want you to start weaning them out. The ones that don't want to battle, send them home. The ones that have wives and children, send them home. Now, all this time Gideon is going, I'm getting less guys, I'm getting less guys. This is not looking good. This is not looking good. You've got to admit, that's what our flesh would be saying. Then he comes to a point where he has a bunch of guys, but he says I want you to take them all down to the river and he says, I just want you to watch them drink water.

Now Gideon at this point, he's hearing from God, he's living by faith, he's probably wondering what in the world's going to happen, but he goes ahead and he watches them drink water. Now the ones which just go ahead and lie down, throw their swords and their shield aside and lay flat and just start slurping the water, you know, like that, he identifies those. But the ones which go like this and they

cup the water in their hands while holding on to their weapons and drink like this with their eyes alert, only three hundred of them drank like that.

God says, I want you to send all the rest of the guys home, keep the guys that drink out of their hands. Now you got to think to yourself there may be some big old guys here, you know. Maybe there's one old guy that just fell straight down and slurping up the water, but you know this guy could throw around 15 guys, you know. Maybe you saw him in a bar room brawl and he threw everybody out the window. You know what I mean? He's a big powerful guy. God, I mean, let's keep that one guy though he's really big and powerful. And God is sending him home because he happens to drink face first in the water. Now you've got to admit if you're a Gideon, I mean, I will obey whatever you want, but really, some big guys are being sent home.

Now wouldn't you kind of doubt that a little? But you know why He picked the men that only cupped their hands in the water? Because they continued to be on the alert and they were able to both take care of their need while simultaneously first serving the need of the battle which is to be prepared. And you know what God is calling you and me to do? To live our lives prepared constantly for the battle, constantly for the temptation, constantly for the sin, constantly for the anger you may have, constantly for the world to come in and offer you something you shouldn't have. You got to be constantly on alert. And God said I just want the three hundred guys that are willing to hold on to the shield and the spear and be aware and alert in case the devil comes out of the brush. Are you all following me?

These are banner men. These were banner men. These were men who knew you don't ever let one arm go at the same time as the other. Always be holding up the banner with one arm. No matter what you're taking care of in life — you're taking care of business. You've got to take care of business, take care of business, but never leave this one arm down. Are you all with me? And in Christianity we may raise the banner when we come to church and we march in and we talk to people and, you know, we've got the banner there, but then when we go home, it's like, okay, and we just fall on our face and

we start stuffing our faces with what we want. You all know what I'm saying? Because we're taking care of ourselves and God has said I'm looking for people who keep me in the forefront of their mind 24/7 and don't drop the banner just because they have a moment to take care of themselves.

Those, though, who are willing to hold up ready for battle, were the ones that he blessed. Those were the ones that he chose to have the victory. And he said, well, you know, but there were still some guys that got to go home and they didn't get killed and stuff like that. Yeah, but the bottom line is they didn't have the joy of the battle. I don't know if you all have ever watched football, you know, but if you've known people who were in sports, it's exciting to watch sports, but it's more exciting to play them. Now you may go, yea, now, the crowd gets all excited — the guy goes — and they're so slow, and then it's fifteen times — but let's say that it's tied and there's ten seconds left and, you know, and whatever, it's the championship, and he reaches up and the ball tips his fingertip and the slow motion shows and then he reaches and he falls and he catches it as he goes across the touchdown line. And the audience goes crazy.

Now we're all excited and we're having fun. We're not having half as much fun as he is. You think you're excited, you ought to be him, you know, as he jumps up and he does all these kinds of dances and doing all this stuff, you know, and he's — you know, he's more excited, you know, because, see, you're watching the game, but he's playing it. We have a church full of spectators in America, but we need more players.

Now the joy of the battle and having victory in Christ Jesus on a daily basis, it's so phenomenal. If you could taste it, if you've never tasted it, it's time to taste it. It's time to live the victory of Christ and not just to watch the show. Live the victory of being unique. Live the victory of being called out to the battle. Live the victory of walking home from the battle having had the joy of conquering the enemy through Christ. That's what God is calling. He is looking for those who are willing to do that. A wonderful

passage, Judges, Chapter 7. Just remember, the enemy will go for the banner as well. One of the things that you do also read in Roman history is how many times the enemy of the Germans would go for the banner because they knew how important that banner was to the Romans. Hans tells the story years ago and it's been told in various ways that how in one of the universities they told the Jews back in the 40's to begin wearing the Star of David to class because they wanted to be able to identify the Jews from the other Dutch who were in the class. And some of the students got upset. And the Jewish people were frightened. They had been beaten and they were frightened to not wear the star because they were afraid they would be immediately deported or executed. So what all the students made a decision to do was they all wore the star.

And so what happened is the next day in class when the Nazis walked in ready to easily pick out the Jews, everybody had on the Star of David. They couldn't arrest the entire city, so they ended up arresting nobody. And they actually put it off for a while in that city, the arrest of a lot of the Jews. Now my point is this: When you only have a few Christians making a stand, they're easier targets than if everybody stood up at once. And I'm going to tell you what you've seen in the last twelve days or so, what you've seen since this horrific thing last week and a half, whatever, since this horrific thing happened in New York City, folks, is you suddenly saw people rise up, banners that are put on windows and the banners that are put on businesses and the banners that are being put on the backs of cars and everything else, the banners In God We Trust and God Bless America and Jesus is the Way. I mean, when you see these things, what happened is there was a spontaneous movement of people to jump up and to shout out and to raise the banner. And you know what? That's when you didn't hear the enemy shout anymore. You know why? Because everybody showed up with the star of the son of David. Because suddenly there's a crowd showing up. (applause)

Now understand there's a power in that momentum in any culture. Whether it's for good or evil, there's a power in that momentum. And we as born again believers have to understand that

momentum, when that spontaneous moment occurred, the enemy cowered back. And as long as everyone on the line that comes over the hill, the entire army that the enemy fights is all carrying banners and they can't spot which one is the one that surges forward and inspires the others, but they are all inspiring each other, they will run for the hills. But when there are only a couple of people carrying the banner, it's a lot easier for them to pick them off. Are you all with me?

And God is calling the Christian church to quit just letting a few people be piercing out there and being left along and being picked off by the enemy because of their stand for Jesus Christ. If the church of Jesus Christ rose up and was identified with Jehovah God, if they raised Jehovah-Nissi, the banner, high over their head and they had a kind of energy, spontaneity that we've seen in this culture, I'm going to tell you, the enemy would spend more time running and looking for a fox hole to hide in than you would find him attacking the body of Christ. And that's my call to you tonight. Check your life.

You know, as we've looked at this tragedy we say, but all things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to his purpose. And that is absolutely true. We get a peace in that. But I want you to remember how the verse is constructed. All things — in fact, you can say it with me if you want to. All things work together for good to those that love God and are called according to, what, His purpose. Say it again. His purpose. Do you wake up in the morning with your purpose as the center of your day or do you wake up in the morning with His purpose as the center of the day? Do you wake up in the morning with your glory and your comfort and your pleasure as the center of your day or do you wake up for His glory and His good pleasure as the center of your day? See, all things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose, but things don't work so good to those who are called according to their own purpose because you're going out defenseless without the banner.

If you're living for yourself without the banner of God leading the way, guiding the way like that fire in the wilderness, protecting and literally driving forward, I'm going to tell you what, you're going to

end up getting crippled in battle. I've got to encourage you, when the body stands up united, it is unstoppable. We have seen that in the Word of God. We see that constantly. We need to be prepared. We need to be prepared. Funny story. Al and Joe are bungee jumping one day. You may know this story, but I love it so much. Al says to Joe, you know, I've been all over Texas and I can't remember ever seeing a bungee jumping, you know, thing down there. We could make a lot of money by bungee jumping down in San Antonio. So Joe thinks this is a great idea so he goes — they pool their money together and they get the resources together and they go ahead and they buy the elastic cord and the insurance, the tower and everything else. They move down to San Antonio and they set up a square. As they are constructing the tower, a crowd begins to assemble. Slowly more and more people gather to watch them at work and when they finish — these are Yankees from up North — when they finish — and some of you may be Yankees, the Lord bless you, we love you — so when they finish — I don't want you to take that negatively. I went to school in Philadelphia and stuff. Anyway, when they had finished, there was such a crowd they thought it would be a good idea to give a demonstration of this bungee thing. So Al jumps, he bounces at the end of the cord, but when he comes back up to the top, Joe notices he has a few cuts and bruises. Unfortunately Joe wasn't able to catch him, so his buddy, you know Al goes down again, bounces and comes back up again, but this time he is really bruised and bleeding. But Joe misses him again. So Al falls down and bounces back up and this time he comes up looking pretty messed up. I mean, he looks like he has a couple broken bones and he's almost unconscious. But finally Joe catches him and says, man, what happened? Was the cord too long? He says, no, but the bungee cord was fine, it was the crowd. And what the heck is a pinata? (audience laughed)

The reason I love that — but, you know, it always make me think about how many of you have ever gone into business and you jumped in feet first and you come out with your empty wallet and your, you know, your bruised ego? Because you just weren't prepared. Let me tell you something, man, if you

don't go into this battle, which in this nation and as our culture and as individuals and as families, we're going to come under assaults. If you're not prepared with the banner in front of you, you're going out into battle unarmed, unprotected and undirected. You've got to stop being ashamed of the name of Jesus and be willing to name who your God is, identify which team you're on, stand there from now on and move forward behind the banner. Amen? Amen. That's our call as believers. That is our call as believers.

So we find what else does a banner do? Well, it tells the battle's progress and it encourages. It tells the battle's progress. They saw that banner moving forward over the hill. The men would be encouraged. They would continue to fight against the enemy. It shows how the progress is. But if that banner moved backwards, the men would fall back. It told how the progress was going. Let me tell you, if you look at other believers standing firm for Christ, doesn't it inspire you? Doesn't it encourage you when you see people standing for the Lord, doing incredible things, giving glory to God? Well, let me just tell you, it both shows the battle's progress, but it also encourages.

It's important that you live your life for Christ. You don't know how many people are watching you that are maybe frightened, but they become encouraged and empowered because they see a brother or sister stand for Jesus. Folks, it literally alters how others are living. They get emboldened when they see you and the spirit of God can use that in a very, very wonderful and powerful way. Would you look at the verse that's underneath here. This is Romans 1:8. Here is Paul using an encouragement, but it's all about the faith of Christ, about Jesus Christ as the banner. Let's read it under number two. "I thank God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed throughout the world!" He says, first of all, I want to thank God for you. He is encouraging them. And he says because your faith is proclaimed, it's heralded, it's held up like a banner. Where? Just on Sunday? No, it's throughout the world. It's a 24/7 thing. That's why he said I thank God. What you're seeing here is not only is Paul

encouraging them, but can't you tell that Paul has been encouraged? I mean, come on, Paul is — you know, he's one of the apostles that God gave this directive to go and establish a church, and he goes into a city and share Christ with them and he comes back a year later, they're still worshipping idols and having immorality and he is going, oh, man, and so he comes in and then he gets all this news probably from all over the world, horrible things that have happened. Dear friends of his have been executed by the Romans and tortured and beaten to death by other civilians that follow other gods and he has this constant thing. But you know what? You can tell at this moment in life he wrote a verse saying I want to let you know this is a refreshing moment. I've been blessed. The news I got from your part of the world, praise the Lord, it was a blessing.

If you've ever been in administration or in a position of leadership, sometimes all you hear is bad news. Do you know what I'm talking about? You can just hear it and hear it and hear it and after a while you're like I could use a little good news. And then somebody walks around and says, hey, can I talk to you and you're like, oh, and they go, no-no-no, I've got some great news. They sit down and you're like, seeing them from that point. You know why? They came in with good news, you know, and they start to walk out, see you later and you go, are you sure, come back, come back, you know. Because it is so good to have them because they have inspired, they've encouraged you. Let me just tell you, you may be called by God to do something, but it is not really for you. It may be for the guy next to you to see you obey God and do it joyfully and that will inspire them to good works.

That's why that banner had to keep going. Those men that held that banner knew they weren't just carrying it for them, they were carrying it for the whole army. It inspired, it encouraged everybody. I Remember about a college drama group. They were up on stage. They were doing this drama. And it was a drama that was a spiritually based drama in a Christian college and they had this one character who stood on the trap door in the middle of the stage and he would shout out the phrase I now descend into hell and the trap door -- the stage manager would pull this lever and the trap door would pop

open and he would just disappear from the stage, drop straight down and, of course, there would be this smoke that would come out and it was a really awesome drama. And you've seen some of these Christian dramas around the world that are being done. Well, it was well received and the actor every night said I descend into hell and he would drop down into that stage and disappear. It was a phenomenal show and it was doing well and people were meeting Christ and everything else and he had gotten ill, this young man. Another young man came in his place and it was just a very unfortunate thing. It happened that night. But it was time for him to say that line and he says, "And I descend into hell," and the stage manager pulled the thing, but that night something happened where when he pulled it, that lever didn't pop and actually kind of jammed so that the door just opened about a foot but then popped and he kind of fell to his knees. And he says again, "And I descend into hell." And that guy is backstage trying to pull that thing and he doesn't fall, he doesn't fall, he doesn't fall. And the audience, of course, is embarrassed and everybody's mouths are wide open. They don't know what is going to happen next. And a student sitting in the balcony jumped up and said, hallelujah, finally hell is full, you know. (audience laughed) And I thought wouldn't that be an encouragement for the Lord to come back and say don't worry about witnessing anymore, hell is full. I mean, that would be great news, you know. That would be an encouraging moment. I will just tell you, until the Lord comes back and says hell is full, no sweat, our job is to continue raising the banner. Amen? We are called to raise the banner. We are called to proclaim Jesus Christ because the devil's going to keep showing up at the battle. Are we?

It's like Goliath showed up every day with his brothers and his comrades. Every day he showed up at the battle and he says who is here to defend the Lord? I want to just tell you today we are called to show up at the battle, but we must raise the banner or we go unprotected. I mean, at church we are called to raise that banner. I mean, that's one of the things, we don't just do this so that we have a building. We don't take up tithes and offerings so we just keep the building because the purpose of a building is nothing if you're not raising the banner. And if all you're doing is playing, you know,

local church country club, then what are you doing? We're here to raise a banner, to see families have their families mended so that they will raise the banner, so that marriages will be mended, so they can raise the banner, so that homes, moms and dads and children can be mended so they can raise the banner, so that singles can have their lives molded so that they can raise the banner. That's why God has called this ministry out is to raise the banner and to see the kingdom of God expanded.

Number three, our last point, why do we have a banner? It's to be raised, not hidden. The word raised, that verb to be raised, is really critical if you'll fill that in, to be raised. It's not to be laid down. It's a protracted warfare and it is a constant holding it on high. But you'll notice the more you hold the banner on high, the lighter it gets and after a while you don't even notice it. Most of us, I'm guessing all of us, were born, they put us in a crib and we just laid there. We didn't have to do much, cried when it was time to eat. Somebody fed us, somebody changed our diapers, life was pretty easy. And then one day we go, I want to have a little motive in life and I went like that and I went like that until one day we went — and we go boom, and we turn over and we're face down. We're excited for the first few seconds until we realize you can't breathe cotton. And so we wonder how we're going to live. And somebody picks us up and puts us back and then everybody goes talking around the house about how we rolled over. And then one day we start nudging forward and we grab a hold of somebody and start sitting up.

Now it takes a tremendous amount of effort, if you don't remember, but it does. It takes a tremendous amount of effort. And those little muscles that have hardly ever been used trying to raise up there and then we fall back and we lie on our side and we raise and we start doing this. And all day long all we do is try to raise ourselves up for some unknown reason so we can eventually get up on our knees so we can begin to crawl and move up against the bar, so we can look through the bars until somebody picks us up and puts us on the floor and we get to crawl around. And then we come to the edge of the sofa and once again we are accepting these obstacles and we are lifting ourselves up and

I'm telling you it is a gargantuan task because we little babies aren't using — we've never used these muscles before. We get there and we actually do it. And eventually one day we go — and they go he walks, you know, but we don't quit. We get right back up. In fact, we have this incredible need to continue moving forward. Finally we, you know, homo erectus. You know the reason they give that is because here we are, this human being, we stand erect. We are able to walk on two feet. Actually a lot of muscle control is used to do that. You take a nap in the afternoon, takes a lot less energy than it takes getting up and running around. So we learn. It takes a tremendous amount of energy. But you know what? Now you get up out of bed and, you know it takes a while and you're taking a shower and you're grumbling. But after a while you are walking around and you don't even think of it. Do you really think, I must stay erect, I must not fall over? I must stay — no, you're not thinking that way. What are you thinking? You take it for granted, don't you? It's a natural thing for you.

Let me tell you about carrying the banner of Christ. If you, like Joshua and Moses, speak it constantly, hear it constantly, memorize it constantly, get excited talking about it constantly, and get in there and you love the fight, you love the fight, you love the battle, you love the joy, you love the glory. And after a while, you know what happens, you don't even know you're doing it. It's you. It's just part of you. And what happens is we want to rest in bed 24/7 and take a few minutes off and actually get up and go to the effort of standing upright. No, do it so consistently after a while that you don't even notice it. Don't think, oh, man, he's talking about carrying a banner. That's going to be heavy. That's going too hard. No, actually after a while, as the Red Sea spreads before you, as the enemy spreads before you because you have the banner and they know a power that's in you, trust me, it's less effort than trying to live the life of a Christian without the banner of Christ. It's a lot less effort. And after a while you don't even notice the weight of the banner. So would you read Matthew 5 with me and we will close, "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lamp stand and it gives light to all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before

men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.” You’re encouraging others when you make the stand.

Romans, 8:28, the verse I said earlier. Let’s just read it together. “All things work together for good to those that love God and are called according to His purpose.” Now, folks, it is His purpose we’re here for. And when you live according to His purpose, He gives you His power. Listen carefully. If you live for His purpose, He gives His power. You know why the banner is not heavy? Because you’re not carrying it on your own. He is actually carrying it. He gives you the power to carry the banner because he is the banner. It’s His name that’s proclaimed. He empowers you to do it. It’s not that heavy because it is His power that lifts it up. So why should we be passionate about it? I’m going to tell you why. Because it comes down to 2,000 years ago the difference between Christianity — and I will possibly — you’ll be hearing this, you know, for the next 20 years from me if the Lord tarries — but the difference between your relationship with Christ and other religions, Buddhism, Zenism, Confucius and whatever it is, is the fact that all of them have prophets. And the prophets kind of tell about God. And the difference with the Christian faith is God came to man. He didn’t send a delivery boy. He sent his Son. Are you all with me?

He didn’t send a delivery boy. He sent his Son. And he just didn’t deliver a message, he just didn’t hand us notes and take off He lay on a cross and was crucified and took our place in punishment. He wasn’t just delivering a message, he was the message and he was the deliverance from the bad message we had up until that point, which was that we were going to die eternally without any hope. So I want to tell you tonight, cherish this faith. Love this faith. Be proud of this faith. it is the revolution that brought peace and joy to a world that was miserable and broken and weeping and dying and bleeding. And it is the only hope for planet earth. I’m going to tell you this is not a religion. This is literally the only hope for planet earth. And if you who have experienced a relationship p with Jesus Christ are ashamed of the gospel, you do not hang the banner high, but you leave it to those who are around you to trample

on it, I'm going to tell you then the world has no hope if God's children are not willing to raise the banner. Closing story. You may have heard years ago Chuck Swindall told it. It affected me and I want to share it with you. There was a man on duty to raise a drawbridge to allow the steamers to pass on the river below. Then his job was to lower it again for trains who were coming across land to cross over this river. One day this man's little boy visited him. And when he visited him, he wanted to watch his daddy working. So here was his daddy in this little building that overlooked the train track which would come down when the ships had gone through, and, of course, the train would come across the land and cross over the river and there he was watching Papa. He was curious as most boys and so he peeked into a trap door that was always left open so his father could keep an eye on the great machinery which was below.

This machinery is what raised and lowered the bridge. Suddenly, the little boy lost his footing and he tumbled down toward all these huge gears that would raise this bridge and close it. As the father tried to reach down and pull him out, he heard the whistle of the approaching train. He knew the train would be full of people and that it would be impossible to stop this fast-moving locomotive. Therefore, the bridge had to be lowered because it had already been raised for the boats going through. A terrible dilemma confronted him. If he saved the people, his son would be crushed in the cogs of these huge steel machine parts. But frantically he tried to free the boy, but to no avail. Finally, the father put his hand to the lever that would start the machinery. He paused. And then with tears in his eyes, he pulled it. The giant gears began to work and the bridge began to clamp down just in time to save the train as it sped across.

The passengers on that train had no idea what that father had just done. They were laughing, they were making merry. Yet the bridge keeper had chosen to save their lives at the cost of his son's. You know, when I see that, I think of the verse, He spared not his own Son, but delivered Him up. And

that son sacrificed and loved by the father for us ought to put God on the front page of our lives because this is not a love where some god or multiple gods in some cult sent a delivery boy. But this is a God who loved us so much He sent His Son. And He loved us who were making merry and all were preoccupied with this partying and enjoying ourselves and putting our purposes first in life. In spite of that, He lowered those gears upon His Son that we might live. And today we no longer are the people on the train unaware of what the Father did. We are aware. We are no longer unaware of what the Son gave that we might live. We are aware.

So today I call upon you. I don't know if you have ten years or fifty years or seventy years or ten days left. Knowing what God did for you to have eternity and to have a life of abundance, isn't it time to pick up the banner and now proclaim the words I love you with the intensity He proclaimed 2,000 years ago to you when he shouted I love you from a cruel, violent, vicious cross? Because if you think, the ultimate banner of all times was raised up was Jesus on a post on a hill called Calvary so you and I could live. It's time to now raise that banner of Christ up in this needy world before it's too late. Amen? Let's close in prayer.