

Against the Odds**811104**

There are some things in life that are so important that they require our action even though the odds are tremendously against our survival. Sometimes we must work alone against great odds. But we are not ever truly alone. We must develop the mentality that 'If Jesus goes with me I'll go; anywhere!' This must be true if it is only the two of us, for we should remember that one and God are a majority. If we stand alone among men, we must feel the presence of God.

We must understand, though, that God has a way of changing the odds whenever he enters the picture. This is illustrated beautifully in Leviticus 26, "If you follow my decrees and are careful to obey my commands ... Five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand, and your enemies will fall by the sword before you... But if you will not listen to me and carry out all these commands ... And I will bring the sword upon you ... As for those of you who are left, I will make their hearts so fearful in the lands of their enemies that the sound of a windblown leaf will put them to flight. They will run as though fleeing from the sword, and they will fall, even though no one is pursuing them." This promise was shown many times in the Old Testament. Gideon fought with odds of about 135,000 to 300 and won (Judges 7:8). Samson, who seemed to reject the help of other men, fought a thousand Philistines at one time (Judges 15:15). These instances show clearly that the odds may not be in our favor, but with God's help we can have the same spirit as Gideon and Samson.

Of course, the greatest expression of these ideas is found in the person of Christ. At his temptation in the wilderness, he met Satan alone. Afterwards, angels came to strengthen him. He was alone at his trial, with those close by denying him. He was alone on his cross as he carried our burden of sin by himself. He even felt forsaken by God as he cried 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' (Matthew 27:46) But he went on to defeat the enemy, triumphing openly over him (Colossians 2.15).

I would like to live with this spirit, thinking that God and I are a majority. But something happened the other day that interfered with this thinking. I sort of let myself get pressured into doing something that, after a little thought, was clearly wrong. The more I thought about it, the more I realized how guilty I was. And I found that this guilt eroded the strength that God gave me. The feeling that God and I were a majority was gone. It was as if I had been walking with God and wandered off. When confronted by some kind of trouble, I turned to seek refuge with God, but he did not seem to be anywhere around! My strength had disappeared. As David said of his sin in Psalms 32:3, "When I kept silent... my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer." To make use of God's strength, our hearts must be clean; not only our sin removed, but our feelings of guilt eliminated. There is only one way that this can happen, and that is through the blood of Jesus Christ as we confess our sinful nature to God. God will give us the strength we need to face the world.

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