

## God is With Us

*"There is an old Hasidic tale about a woman whose name was Anna Kebbitch.*

*She was a complainer.*

*All day long she complained:*

*"I have so little money, my clothes are like old rags."*

*"My health is so bad, my back feels like the walls of Jericho."*

*"I must walk so far to draw water, my feet are like watermelons."*

*"My house is so small, I can barely move in it."*

*"My children visit me so little that they hardly know me."*

*One day, Anna Kebbitch woke up with an itch on her nose.*

*All day long her nose itched.*

*She went into town to visit the rabbi.*

*When the rabbi saw Anna, he asked her, "How are you, Anna?"*

*Anna replied, "I have so little money, my clothes are like old rags.*

*My health is so bad, my back feels like the walls of Jericho.*

*I must walk so far to draw water, my feet are like watermelons.*

*My house is so small, I can barely move in it.*

*My children visit me so little that they hardly know me.*

*And now I have this itch on my nose and it plagues me so.*

*Tell me, Rabbi, what "does it mean?"*

*The rabbi said, “Anna, your itch is the Kebbitch Itch—the ‘complainier’s itch.’”*

*Its meaning is this: **However you consider yourself, so shall you be.**”*

*The next morning, Anna woke up and her nose was still itching.*

*She could barely move.*

*Her back had turned to stone like the walls of Jericho.*

*When she looked about her, she noticed that her house had shrunk until her arms stuck out the windows...*

*...and her legs hung out the front door.*

*She could not move in it.*

*On the end of her legs were two huge watermelons. Her clothes had turned to old rags.*

*When her son and daughter came walking by, Anna called out to them,...*

*...but they “continued walking on, wagging their heads—they didn’t know her.*

*And her nose continued to itch.*

*In despair Anna remembered the meaning of the Kebbitch Itch:...*

*...However you consider yourself, so shall you be.*

*What does this mean?*

*Anna began to think: You know, I do have money enough to live on and more.*

*Henceforth, I will give out of my abundance to those who are not so well off.*

*My health is not so bad.*

*Actually, for someone my age, I feel quite well.*

*I’m glad I have such a nice house to live in.*

*It's not large, but it's comfortable and quite warm.*

*I really don't mind my walk to draw water.*

*I love to smell the flowers along the path.*

*And my children—I'm so proud that they have become independent and are now able to take care of themselves.*

*Miraculously, while Anna was saying these things, her situation returned to normal—and her outlook on life changed forever.*

*When the rabbis tell Anna's story, they end with this statement:*

*May your noses itch forever.*

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We may not get the Kebbitch itch, but we need to be reminded that our outlook affects outcomes.

Our attitude “makes a difference.

**Let me say it again...**

**Far from a Kebbitch itch...our attitude...makes a difference!**

Our situations today...are pretty bad!

But remember this...**our situation will get better.**

**In the midst of all that we are experiencing...things will get better !**

***Remember...However you...consider yourself,...so shall you be."***

**...we “MUST”...decide to BE THE DIFFERENCE THAT WE WANT !**

In our text today... Israel had fallen into disobedience and God had allowed the Midianites to oppress them...

...let me take a parenthetical pause right here...

I believe that...sin has paralyzed the world...

People are doing what they want to do...however they want to do it...without any conscious or sub-conscious thought about God !

I believe that what is happening today...is the World has fallen into disobedience...

It seems as if...every time we seem to get on our feet...something catastrophic happens...

Assassinations of the 60's

Struggle for Civil Rights

AIDS epidemic 80's and 90's

Struggle for Equal Rights...

The terrorist attack of 911

Global warming which has allowed nature to unleash its wrath...

Polar vortex...tropical storms...Tsunami's...Hurricanes devasting whole islands like Trinidad...Caribbean...and Puerto Rico.

Then we get back to a semblance of normal.

In our text...Every time the harvest was ripe, the Midianites would swoop down out of the mountains and raid the country ...

...and strip away all of the harvest and livestock and so "Israel was brought very low because of Midian.

And the people of Israel cried out for help to the Lord."

**Beloved...our land has been ravished today !**

**God...today our streets...businesses...and stores have been ravished!**

**COVID -19...Shelter-In-Place...Continued Police Brutality...Knee on the neck of George Floyd...**

**Murder of Breonna Turner while she slept...**

**Ahmaud Arbery murder at the hands of three white men who ran him down and murdered him while he was out jogging**

**Law Enforcement continues its abuse of Excessive Force during Peaceful Protests around the world...**

**Lack of judgement...No regard for Human Life...**

**Continued Police Abuse of Power and Authority !!!**

**Continued cries for sweeping police reforms !**

**White Supremacy...White Privilege...entrenched Racism...**

**Continued Divisive Language from Capital Hill...National Guard...Militia**

**Expected resurgence of COVID-19...more social distancing...masks...**

**...continued Shelter-In-Place...Unemployment, under education,**

**Closed churches...virtual worship services...endless Zoom meetings**

**Closed businesses/re-opened businesses,**

**economy shut-down...economy opening**

**Senate battle over making lynching a federal crime...**

**OUR LAND HAS BEEN RAVISHED...what we used to know is now gone!**

We too... “***cry out to the Lord***”

In our text...“ *the Lord turned to Gideon and said, ...*

... “*Go in this might of yours and save Israel from the hand of Midian; do not I send you?*”

And Gideon said to him, “*Please, Lord, how can I save Israel?*”

We too ask...Lord...how can we save our country ?

Behold, we are weak...our churches are filled with Senior saints who are tired...

...and people who don't really seem to know God...or even want to know God.

Young people claiming to be Spiritual...and not religious !

Our world needs a Spiritual Awakening Today !

We appear to be the least in our father's house".

We go to church Sunday after Sunday...and we still don't know God!

We are Spiritually Weak...and Spiritually feeble !

This is where you shout... Gideon is the least of his clan, he is the runt of the litter (so to speak),...

...he is in hiding...when the angel of the Lord approaches him and yet he is called...

..."O mighty people of valor"...“ Go in this might of yours.”

You have to wonder if Gideon looked over his shoulder and thought, “You mean me?”

The point is God sees what is...before it even exists.

God has given us the power and authority...to do even greater things than Jesus...

We celebrated Pentecost Sunday last week.

As the knee of that Officer lay across the throat of George Floyd...and his breath was taken...

We are reminded that God gave us His very breath, His Pneuma.

Jesus told the Disciples and His followers to assemble in the Upper Room and wait.

**Jesus told them to wait...because they were going to receive POWER!**

**Dunamis...Power like dynamite!**

**Dynamite destroys...Dunamis gives life !**

**Dunamis...means power...force...ability...in other words...divine influence !**

**God was going to send them Help!**

**God was sending them the Paraclete...The Helper...The Advocate...in the Holy Spirit!**

**Beloved...we can do more in a day..in the Spirit's power...than we can do in a lifetime in our own power!**

**God knows the future and speaks as if it's already present because, God, is really...With Us !**

**God knew that Gideon's tiny little force of 300 farmers and shepherds...**

**...could never destroy a camp of 135,000 seasoned, experienced army.**

**...God knows that America's original sin is racism...rooted in privilege...built on the belief of White Supremacy.**

**God knows that the Grand Wizard is in the White House trying to divide the nation !**

**God knows...we are protesting so that...REAL CHANGE occurs!**

**God Knows...the injustices launched at many people of color !**

**God Knows...that White Supremacy is the root of the evil across the land!**

**God knows ...that the root of the excessive force and Police Brutality that people of color experience is RACISM !**

**God knows...systems of oppression must change !**

**God Knows...hatred...bigotry...and racial bias...needs to be eradicated !**

**God knows...police must be held accountable!**

**God Knows...the deaths that COVID-19 has wreaked !**

**God knows...the jobs lost!**

**God knows that the wealth of the wicked needs to be equally distributed.**

**God knows... that all God's creation must learn to love one another.**

**Yes...God KNOWS ALL !**

**Beloved...as we stand with God, all things are possible !**

**So don't lose hope, even if the odds look exceedingly hopeless.**

**"God has given into Gideon's hand the Midianites and all the camp".**

**So God has given into our hands God's victory, in the name of The Holy Spirit, whereby God receives the glory !**

**The victory that we will see...is God's !**

**Why...because...God is With Us !**

**Immanuel- God Is With Us !**

**God created mankind for relationship...**

**...and throughout humanity has revealed,...**

**... generation by generation,...**

**...how we are to relate to God!**

**God's presence fills all of reality.**

**Our sin separated us from Him, and this drove God to action.**

**Through a baby, Emmanuel,**

**God draws us close despite our sin,**

**God draws us close despite our disobedience.**

**God draws us close despite our “gods”**

**God draws us close**

**Draw us close to today...Dear God!**

**God is With Us !**

**We Live Into Hope...because God is With Us !**

**There is Hope... Marching in the streets !**

**There is Hope...in the speeches ...given at the protests !**

**There is Hope...in our young people..leading the rallys !**

**There is Hope...in the Black...Brown...White...all the people coming together!**

**Keep Hope Alive !**

**Keep Hope Alive !**

**Keep Hope Alive !**

**May your noses itch forever...**

**...because when our noses itch...**

**...we know that our ...OUTLOOK...AFFECTS...OUR OUTCOME !**

**Our attitude...really...makes a difference...**

**...because...Emmanuel...God Is With Us ! Amen**