



**"No Cross,
No Crown"**

The Cross and Crown

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This past week, I read the story of Gideon as part of my Old Testament devotions. What an amazing story! Can you imagine God giving one enemy soldier a dream and another the interpretation, all to convince Gideon that his army of 300 had the upper hand against an army so vast that not even their camels could be counted?

I have to admit that there's a lot of Gideon in me. Not Gideon the conquering hero Gideon, but Gideon the "I'm pretty sure I'm not the right guy for the job." I say that not as false humility; I actually have an evaluation from the church planting office of the Assemblies of God that rates my skillset as well below average for church planting!

So why am I pursuing this ministry? Well, since God called me to it, I guess you need to ask him. I think I know what he'd say.

God told Gideon that his original army was too big: If they went out and won the battle, Israel would be proud and claim that they'd won because of their own strength.

Now, I firmly believe that God has planned a great victory for our Tioga/Nicetown neighborhood, and, when it comes, we won't be able to say that it's because we had the most resources or the best advisors. God wants to make sure that everyone knows that it was only by his strength, his wisdom, his provision – and, most of all, his sovereign will.



When you think you're not up to the task, rejoice! Remember that God chooses the foolish, the weak and the lowly, so that our boasting can only be in him. (See I Corinthians 1:26–30) It is when we think that we are up to a task that we're on dangerous ground, at risk of trying to push through in our own strength. (If you're not sure why that's a bad idea, I suggest reading about Joshua's second battle, in Joshua chapter 7.)

I do want to acknowledge that God has, of course, given us a marvelous leadership team, starting at the top with Candace, whom he spent decades preparing for such a time as this. And, of course, we also have tremendous prayer support from all of you. Thank you! I would never discount that. In the final analysis, though, my faith and my faithfulness have their roots in God.

My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labor in vain. (Psalm 121:1, 127:1)

Thanks for Praying!

Your faithfulness is our anchor to the Solid Rock! Please continue to pray for:

- opportunities to partner with organizations in our neighborhood,
- our Spring musical and fundraiser,
- a new insurance company (by March!), and,
- a member who asked prayer for healing in her eyes.







Performing Arts at Spring Garden Academy

We're praying with you!

If you're on our mailing list*, you're on our prayer list! If there's anything specific that we can join with you in praying about, please let us know.

From time to time, we hear from people who actually read these newsletters, and it's such an encouragement! Thanks for keeping in touch!

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* **Important:** If you'd rather not be on our mailing list, we won't be offended! Just call or drop us a note, and we'll remove you. (We'll still keep you on our prayer list!)

If you'd rather receive this letter via e-mail, please let us know!

Did you know?

Although they're vegetables from a culinary standpoint, from a botanical standpoint, eggplants are berries. Like other botanical berries (including watermelons and bananas but not strawberries), eggplants are the fruit of a plant, with the plant's seeds inside it.

Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so.

(Genesis I:11)



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