

Mighty Victory

Text : **Judges 7: 1-28**

- A. We have been studying how God shows His strength through weak men.** S#1.
S#2.
1. God called the youngest son in the smallest family in the smallest tribe.
 2. This man was involved in a cowardly act when the “Angel of the Lord” called him.
 - a. He was beating the heads of wheat off of the stalks while hiding in a winepress.
 - b. Gideon had adjusted to a life lived in fear. (*Christians adjust to the status quo – drift*)
- B. The nation of Israel was impoverished and living under oppression.**
1. They’d been defeated and pillaged by the Midianites for seven (7) consecutive years,
 2. They saw no hope of escaping their oppression so they were calling to the Lord. **6:6**
- C. They were calling to the wrong source for help because God sent the Midianites.**
1. **Judges 6: 1** – Then the sons of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord; S#3.
 and the Lord gave them into the hands of Midian seven years.
 2. Israel was in violation of their covenant with God because they worshipped Baal.
Judges 6:10 – I said to you, "I am the Lord your God; you shall not fear the gods of the Amorites in whose land you live. But you have not obeyed Me."
- D. Israel’s need was not for a deliverer, but for national repentance.** S#4.
1. So, God sent them what they needed, He sent to them a prophet to teach them.
Judges 6:7 – Now it came about when the sons of Israel cried to the Lord on account of Midian, **8** that the Lord sent a prophet to the sons of Israel, and he said to them, "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, 'It was I who brought you up from Egypt and brought you out from the house of slavery
 2. If the sin is removed, the barrier between the sinner and God is removed.
 - a. **Isa. 59 : 1** – Behold, the Lord's hand is not so short that it cannot save; nor is S#5.
 His ear so dull that it cannot hear. **2** But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear.
 - b. Sin caused their problem and sin was blocking the relief from the problem.
- E. Gideon was called to lead the nation back to God.**
1. Being the son of a priest of Baal, Gideon was well known as a Baal devotee.
 - a. Being the youngest son, Gideon was not known as a leader.
 - b. His hiding in a winepress showed that he was not known as a brave man.
 2. **Why call Gideon?** His weakness would demonstrate the power of God at work.

S#6.

F. After calling Gideon God set about to convert him, to create faith within Gideon.

1. Gideon had no faith in himself and it was obvious he had no faith in God.
2. Jesus worked a miracle in front of Gideon to prove that He was God.

Judges 6: 21 – Then the angel of the Lord put out the end of the staff that was in his hand and touched the meat and the unleavened bread; and fire sprang up from the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread. Then the angel of the Lord vanished from his sight.

3. When Gideon saw the miracle, he was convinced that God was real.

S#7.

Judges 6: 22 – When Gideon saw that he was the angel of the Lord, he said, "Alas, O Lord God! For now I have seen the angel of the Lord face to face." ²³ The Lord said to him, "Peace to you, do not fear; you shall not die." (*Obviously, Gideon thought he would die.* -Ex. 33:20)

G. On the basis of Gideon's new conviction that Jehovah is God, he made declaration of faith, i.e., he built an altar as a witness.

S#8.

1. **Judges 6: 24** – Then Gideon built an altar there to the Lord and named it The Lord is Peace. To this day it is still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.
2. This was not an altar for sacrificing and is not to confused with altar of verse 26.

H. God then began to expand Gideon's faith with a challenge.

1. Gideon was sent to destroy the altar of Baal which his father operated.

a. **Judges 6: 25** – Now on the same night the Lord said to him, "Take your father's bull and a second bull seven years old, and pull down the altar of Baal which belongs to your father, and cut down the Asherah that is beside it; ²⁶ and build an altar to the Lord your God on the top of this stronghold in an orderly manner, and take a second bull and offer a burnt offering with the wood of the Asherah which you shall cut down."

S#9.

b. This was the first action that required of Gideon faith and a public commitment.

2. God was requiring a very significant commitment on Gideon's part.

a. Tearing down His altar would invoke the anger of his only support groups.

b. Surprisingly, the father placed his faith in Baal to defend himself.

* 3. God made Gideon NO guarantee of a positive outcome or protection from reprisals.

I. Gideon was given a new name by his father.

S#10.

1. **Judges 6: 32** – Therefore on that day he named him Jerubbaal, that is to say, "Let Baal contend against him," because he had torn down his altar.
2. From that day forward his life was irrevocably changed.

S#11.

As we begin our study of the “Mighty Victory” of Israel over the Midianites, we must bear in mind that this whole event is about GOD, not about Gideon.

I. Gideon prepares to fight the Midianites.

S#12.

A. Gideon blew a trumpet to call the local people together to fight the Midianites.

1. Motivated by the Spirit is not to be miraculously controlled by God .
 - a. **Judges 6: 34** – So the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon; and he blew a trumpet, and the Abiezrites were called together to follow him. S#13.
 - b. All Christians have the motivation of the Spirit of God.
Rom. 8: 9 – However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.
 - c. Faith motivates the Christian to apply the words of the Spirit that He has revealed.
2. Gideon had a message ... God will deliver us.
3. He sent messengers to Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali requesting they come to fight.

B. When they had all assembled, there were only 32, 000 to fight 135,000. S#14.

1. **Judges 7: 3** ... $32-22 = 10$... when 22, 000 were removed 10,000 remained.
2. The number of Midianites was set at **135,000** only by estimates of bible “scholars.”
3. If these numbers are correct, Israel was out numbered **4 to 1**.

S#15.

C. They were so badly outnumbered, Gideon became fearful and asked for a sign.

1. He asked for the dew to fall on a fleece, **but** surrounding ground to be dry.
2. When God did that, Gideon was still fearful so he asked God to reverse it.
3. After the second miraculous sign, Israel camped on a hill in the valley. (**Jezreel**)

S#16.

D. It must have been to Gideon’s horror when God said he had too many soldiers.

1. Gideon was told to send away all who were afraid to fight.
 - a. **Judges 7: 3** – Now therefore come, proclaim in the hearing of the people, saying, ‘Whoever is afraid and trembling, let him return and depart from Mount Gilead. So 22,000 people returned, but 10,000 remained.
 - b. Being out numbered **13 to 1** would tend to make one fearful.
 - c. Fear indicated a lack of faith in God’s power to deliver them.
2. There was biblical precedent in the Law for this command.
Deut. 20: 8 – Then the officers shall speak further to the people and say, S#17.
 ‘Who is the man that is afraid and fainthearted? Let him depart and return to his house, so that he might not make his brothers’ hearts melt like his heart.

3. Imagine Gideon's dismay when he saw **22,000** of his force departed.

a. With **2/3** of his men gone the odds were now **13 to 1** against them.

b. Those remaining had to have been second guessing their decision to stay.

S#18.

**** Remember. God gave His motivation for using few Israelites to defeat the Midianites. God didn't want them to think they delivered themselves.**

E. Gideon's confidence was again assaulted when God said the 10K was too many.

1. **Judges 7: 4** – Then the Lord said to Gideon, "The people are still too many; **S#19.**
bring them down to the water and I will test them for you there.
Therefore it shall be that he of whom I say to you, 'This one shall go with you,' he shall go with you; but everyone of whom I say to you, 'This one shall not go with you,' he shall not go."

2. Imagine Gideon's dismay when God chose only **300** to stay and fight.

3. The odds were now **400 to 1** against Israel.

(*Even the U.S. special forces would reject those odds.*)

4. Gideon and His men could look down at the enormous force they were to face.

II. God prepared Gideon for the battle.

S#20.

A. Gideon was afraid, but he was going to go so God gave him a final sign.

1. The Israelites could see the Midianites in the valley below,

a. This valley is called Jezreel here, but in other places it is called "Megiddo." **S#21.**

b. The prophet Joel called it "the valley of decision." **S#22.**

Joel 3: 14 – Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision!

For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision.

c. Famous battlefield where two armies meet and only one comes out.

d. Famous as the location of the "**battle of Armageddon.**"

2. Gideon is told to take his servant and do some reconnaissance. **IF** he is afraid.

a. They heard a man talking about his dream of a barley cake ... *poor man's food.*

b. His friend interpreted the dream as God giving Gideon the victory over them.

c. The interpretation was very specific, even to the name of Gideon's father.

Judges 7: 14 – His friend replied, "This is nothing less than the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, **S#23**
a man of Israel; God has given Midian
and all the camp into his hand."

3. Gideon's response was to bow down and worship God ... *his faith was established.*

B. Gideon returned to the camp eager to lead his 300 men to victory.

1. He assured his men that God had given them the victory.
2. The men were instructed to go into battle without a sword in their hands.
 - a. They had a trumpet in one hand. (*Probably a ram's horn.*)
 - b. In the other hand they had a covered torch.
3. It's amazing that they had 300 horns and 300 jars that would cover w/o extinguish.
 - a. It is logical that each man would have a torch for light and not all carry horns.
 - b. They attacked the same night so they had no time to make jars, horns, or torches.
 - c. Thus, we can see God's providential hand working in this.

C. They had a good plan for the use of the 300 men. (*No frontal attach*)

1. There was even a good plan to defeat the retreating enemy.

Judges 7: 24 – Gideon sent messengers throughout all the hill country of **S#24.** Ephraim, saying, "Come down against Midian and take the waters before them, as far as Beth-barah and the Jordan." So all the men of Ephraim were summoned and they took the waters as far as Beth-barah and the Jordan.
2. They attacked at precisely the right time.
 - a. At the shifting of the guards there were armed men walking about in the camp.
 - b. It was very dark and quiet so the sound of the trumpets would seem loud and echo.
 - c. There were men in the camp from at least three nationality. *Amorites & Easterners*
3. It doesn't say whether the plan was from Gideon or from God.
 - a. Neither the plan nor the planer were relevant details.
 - b. The objective was not to demonstrate military excellence, but the power of God.

D. The Midianites were not defeated by 300 men without swords, but by God. S#25.

1. By the use of dreams God planted fear in the hearts of the enemy.
2. The many lights and horns caused them to believe they were being attacked by a superior force so they panicked and began to fight each other in the dark,
3. God had used this tactic before when King Ben-hadad of Aram besieged Samaria.

II King 7: 6 – For the Lord had caused the army of the Arameans to hear a **S#26.** sound of chariots and a sound of horses, even the sound of a great army, so that they said to one another, "Behold, the king of Israel has hired against us the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Egyptians, to come upon us." ⁷ Therefore they arose and fled in the twilight, and left their tents and their horses and their donkeys, even the camp just as it was, and fled for their life. (*Elisha*)

S#27.

III. The purpose of God was to use the destruction of the Midianites as a visual aide.

S#28.

A. This is why God chose a man with no claim to fame or reputation for bravery.

1. He used a man from the small half-tribe of Manasseh.
2. He chose the least influential man in a small family.
3. Thus, whatever he did reflected on God, not him or his family's strength.

S#29.

B. God chose one who had no faith in Him and persuaded him to be a follower.

1. Gideon was involved in an act of cowardice when God called him.
2. Gideon was from a family of Baal worshippers.
3. He knew of God, but had no respect for Him. *He let us down when we needed Him.*

S#30.

C. God sent 300 men into a battle where they were outnumbered 400 to 1.

1. It was amazing that God was able to even get men to go into such a battle.
2. God sent them into a hopeless battle without weapons, just lamps and horns.
- * 3. No one could possibly attribute the victory to anyone other than God.

S#31.

D. That was God's plan for the battle ... *to cause the people to believe in and follow***IV. What do we learn from this event ?**

S#32.

A. God can never be beaten by a superior force. (*God alone is a majority.*)

S#33.

B. God will prepare people and circumstances to accomplish HIS purposes.

S#34.

C. God can use anyone to accomplish HIS will. *CAN USE YOU !!*

S#35.

1. In order to serve God one must walk by faith, **NOT** by his own strength.
2. Nothing is impossible if one is in Christ and has faith.

Matt. 19: 25 – When the disciples heard this, they were very astonished and said, "Then who can be saved?" **26** And looking at them Jesus said to them, "With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

S#36.

3. We often limit God with our unbelief.

Mark 9: 23 – But if You can do anything, take pity on us and help us!" **23** And Jesus said to him, "If You can?" All things are possible to him who believes.
24 Immediately the boy's father cried out and said, "I do believe; help my unbelief."

S#37.

D. Don't hide in a winepress ... let God use you to do His work.

S#38.

INVITATION :

S#39. ... Communion slide

Lesson Text :

Judges 7: 1-28

- 1** Then Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) and all the people who were with him, rose early and camped beside the spring of Harod; and the camp of Midian was on the north side of them by the hill of Moreh in the valley.
- 2** The Lord said to Gideon, "The people who are with you are too many for Me to give Midian into their hands, for Israel would become boastful, saying, 'My own power has delivered me.' 3 "Now therefore come, proclaim in the hearing of the people, saying, 'Whoever is afraid and trembling, let him return and depart from Mount Gilead.'" So 22,000 people returned, but 10,000 remained.
- 4** Then the Lord said to Gideon, "The people are still too many; bring them down to the water and I will test them for you there. Therefore it shall be that he of whom I say to you, 'This one shall go with you,' he shall go with you; but everyone of whom I say to you, 'This one shall not go with you,' he shall not go." 5 So he brought the people down to the water. And the Lord said to Gideon, "You shall separate everyone who laps the water with his tongue as a dog laps, as well as everyone who kneels to drink." 6 Now the number of those who lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, was 300 men; but all the rest of the people knelt to drink water. 7 The Lord said to Gideon, "I will deliver you with the 300 men who lapped and will give the Midianites into your hands; so let all the other people go, each man to his home." 8 So the 300 men took the people's provisions and their trumpets into their hands. And Gideon sent all the other men of Israel, each to his tent, but retained the 300 men; and the camp of Midian was below him in the valley.
- 9** Now the same night it came about that the Lord said to him, "Arise, go down against the camp, for I have given it into your hands. 10 "But if you are afraid to go down, go with Purah your servant down to the camp, 11 and you will hear what they say; and afterward your hands will be strengthened that you may go down against the camp." So he went with Purah his servant down to the outposts of the army that was in the camp. 12 Now the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the sons of the east were lying in the valley as numerous as locusts; and their camels were without number, as numerous as the sand on the seashore. 13 When Gideon came, behold, a man was relating a dream to his friend. And he said, "Behold, I had a dream; a loaf of barley bread was tumbling into the camp of Midian, and it came to the tent and struck it so that it fell, and turned it upside down so that the tent lay flat." 14 His friend replied, "This is nothing less than the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel; God has given Midian and all the camp into his hand."
- 15** When Gideon heard the account of the dream and its interpretation, he bowed in worship. He returned to the camp of Israel and said, "Arise, for the Lord has given the camp of Midian into your hands." 16 He divided the 300 men into three companies, and he put trumpets and empty pitchers into the hands of all of them, with torches inside the pitchers. 17 He said to them, "Look at me and do likewise. And behold, when I come to the outskirts of the camp, do as I do. 18 "When I and all who are with me blow the trumpet, then you also blow the trumpets all around the camp and say, 'For the Lord and for Gideon.'"
- 19** So Gideon and the hundred men who were with him came to the outskirts of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, when they had just posted the watch; and they blew the trumpets and smashed the pitchers that were in their hands. 20 When the three companies blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers, they held the torches in their left hands and the trumpets in their right hands for blowing, and cried, "A sword for the Lord and for Gideon!" 21 Each stood in his place around the camp; and all the army ran, crying out as they fled. 22 When they blew 300 trumpets, the Lord set the sword of one against another even throughout the whole army; and the army fled as far as Beth-shittah toward Zererah, as far as the edge of Abel-meholah, by Tabbath. 23 The men of Israel were summoned from Naphtali and Asher and all Manasseh, and they pursued Midian.
- 24** Gideon sent messengers throughout all the hill country of Ephraim, saying, "Come down against Midian and take the waters before them, as far as Beth-barah and the Jordan." So all the men of Ephraim were summoned and they took the waters as far as Beth-barah and the Jordan. 25 They captured the two leaders of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb, and they killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and they killed Zeeb at the wine press of Zeeb, while they pursued Midian; and they brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon from across the Jordan.