

GRACE SO AMAZING EVEN FOR THE WEAKLINGS

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Heb. 11:32-34, Jud. 6-8

“Gideon – from Fearfulness to Faithfulness and Victory”

Heb. 11:32 And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me **to tell of Gedeon**, and *of* Barak, and *of* Samson, and *of* Jephthae; *of* David also, and Samuel, and *of* the prophets:

33 Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

34 Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

This morning we observe how *Grace is So Amazing* that even weaklings can be God's instruments for wonderful victories in God's work. Gideon is included in the "Hall of Fame of Faith" that is found in Heb. 11. In the Book of Judges, we find an account of his life that qualified him for such an honor. As we observe his actions, we learn of principles that believers today can learn and implement for God's glory, even from unlikely sources.

I. LIVING A LIFE OF FEAR

Judg. 6:11 And there came an angel of the LORD, and sat under an oak which *was* in Ophrah, that *pertained* unto Joash the Abiezrite: and his son **Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide *it* from the Midianites.**

A. The Interruption – “And there came an angel of the LORD...

❖ Gideon was not a defiant warrior against the Midianite enemy.

B. The Inconspicuous – “...Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress...”

❖ Gideon was trying NOT to attract attention while just trying to survive.

C. The Insidious – “...to hide *it* from the Midianites.”

- ❖ He lived in fear and was hiding from the perpetual threat of the enemy.
- ❖ Many believers today live in fear of the enemies of Christ – “closet Christians.”
- ❖ Many believers today may be hiding from the need of world evangelism due to fear of inflation, or some other deterrent.

II. LEARNING TO LEAD BY FAITH

Judg. 6:12 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, **The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.**

15 And he said unto him, Oh my Lord, **wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor** in Manasseh, and I *am* the least in my father's house.

16 And **the LORD said unto him, Surely I will be with thee**, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.

A. The Preparation for Future Conflicts

- ❖ The first lesson that Gideon needed to learn was God's estimation of him even while he was fearful and hiding, the Lord called Gideon a "mighty man of valour."

Judg. 6:12 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, **The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.**

- ❖ Gideon's humble attitude was strengthened by the Lord's promise – "...Surely I will be with thee..." 6:16, "...and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man."
- ❖ The Lord directed Gideon to build an altar and destroy the idol of Baal.
- ❖ This first step of obedience would lead to a greater challenge to walk by faith.
- ❖ The plan to use Gideon to "...smite the Midianites..." began with the preparation to strengthen his faith by facing a lesser battle – destroying the altars of Baal.

B. The Performance for Faithful Confidence

Judg. 6:25 And it came to pass the same night, **that the LORD said unto him**, Take thy father's young bullock, even the second bullock of seven years old, and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and cut down the grove that *is* by it:

26 And build an altar unto the LORD thy God upon the top of this rock, in the ordered place, and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove which thou shalt cut down.

27 Then Gideon took ten men of his servants, **and did as the LORD had said unto him**: and so it was, because he feared his father's household, and the men of the city, that he could not do *it* by day, that he did *it* by night. ...

34 But **the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon**, and he blew a trumpet; and Abiezer was gathered after him.

- ❖ The Lord announced His plan to use Gideon to “...smite the Midianites...” but let the preparation start with a lighter challenge closer to home.

Judg. 6:16 And **the LORD said unto him, Surely I will be with thee**, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.

- ❖ As Gideon obediently accomplished the lesser assignment, God strengthened his faith for the greater assignment.
- ❖ Gideon overcame his fear and his family in preparation for the primary battle.
- ❖ Faith Promise giving operates in a similar way – trusting God, then seeing Him lead into even greater challenges each year.

III. LOVING THE LORD FOR FRUITFULNESS

- ❖ As Gideon's faith is strengthened, he proceeds to the greatest challenge, exhibiting his love for the Lord through his obedience to follow the directions to face the Midianites.

Jn. 14:15 **If ye love me, keep my commandments.**

...

23 Jesus answered and said unto him, **If a man love me, he will keep my words:** and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

A. Exodus of the Cowards, 7:3

Judg. 7:3 Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, **Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early** from mount Gilead. **And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand.**

- ❖ Gideon started out with 32,000 soldiers – 22,000 were “fearful and afraid” and returned, while 10,000 soldiers remained to engage the enemy.

- ❖ Some professing believers are simply too fearful to trust God for Faith Promise and do not get involved.
- ❖ After such a devastating loss of manpower, the Lord led Gideon to observe the caliber of those who remained.

B. Eliminating the Careless, 7:5

Judg. 7:5 So he brought down the people unto the water: and the LORD said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink.

- ❖ The soldiers who were careless, not alert to watch and be vigilant of the enemy, eliminated themselves from the confrontation with the enemy.
- “Americans have recently spent more money buying Halloween costumes for their pets than the amount given to reach the unreached.”

Claude Hickman

- *For every \$100,000 that Christians make, they give \$1.70 to the unreached.*

❖ Believers should not attempt to serve the Lord haphazardly, but be “...sober...vigilant...”

1 Pet. 5:8 **Be sober, be vigilant**; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

C. Establishing those Committed, 7:6-7

Judg. 7:6 And the number of them that 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.

7 And the LORD said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the *other* people go every man unto his place.

- ❖ The soldiers who were vigilant proceeded into battle. The “careless” were let “...go every man unto his place.”
- ❖ Gideon’s men were depleted from 32,000 to 300 men → **“Little is much when God is in it.”**

1 Sam. 14:6b “...it may be that the LORD will work for us: **for *there is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few.***”

D. Executing the Commission, 7:8-9, 16-18, 20-22

Judg. 7:8 So the people took victuals in their hand, and their trumpets: and he sent all *the rest of* Israel every man unto his tent, and retained those three hundred men: and the host of Midian was beneath him in the valley.

9 And it came to pass the same night, that **the LORD said unto him, Arise, get thee down unto the host; for I have delivered it into thine hand.**

16 And he divided the three hundred men *into* three companies, and he put a trumpet in every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and lamps within the pitchers.

17 And he said unto them, Look on me, and do likewise: and, behold, when I come to the outside of the camp, it shall be *that*, as I do, so shall ye do.

18 When I blow with a trumpet, I and all that *are* with me, then blow ye the trumpets also on every side of all the camp, and say, *The sword* of the LORD, and of Gideon. ...

20 And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and held the lamps in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands to blow *withal*: and they cried, The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon.

21 And they stood every man in his place round about the camp: and **all the host ran, and cried, and fled.**

22 And the three hundred blew the trumpets, and **the LORD set every man's sword against his fellow**, even throughout all the host: and **the host fled** to Bethshittah in Zererath, *and* to the border of Abelmeholah, unto Tabbath.

- ❖ The odds didn't favor Gideon and the Israelites: 300 against 135,000 (see 8:10.)
- ❖ The odds do not favor a local church in reaching almost 8 billion people around the globe!
- ❖ The appearance of insurmountable odds must be left to the Lord and trust His guidance.
- ❖ The believer's responsibility to be a good steward of what is possessed, even if it is only a trumpet, torch, and pitcher. "Little is much when God is in it!"

Summary

- ❖ Gideon's life was interrupted by God to become involved in a greater work.
- ❖ Gideon considered himself as unworthy and unqualified, but God considered him a "mighty man of valour."
- ❖ The LORD increased Gideon's faith with lesser opportunities to serve Him before leading him into a greater battle.
- ❖ Salvation is the first step of faith for a believer to begin a life of victorious living.

Rom. 8:37 Nay, in all these things **we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.**

- ❖ If an unlikely person like Gideon can be used of God against a mighty foe, how much more can the Lord use someone today that is submissive to Christ who loves Him?

Conclusion

Rom. 8:38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- ❖ Missions' Conference is a wonderful time to evaluate a personal love for the Savior and one's personal commitment to "world evangelism," – believers fall into the following categories:

1. Those who are awakened unto the great need of world evangelism, **desiring to do SOMETHING.**
2. Those already awakened unto the great need of world evangelism and **desire to do MORE;**
3. Those who are nominally interested about the great need of world evangelism and are mildly curious about it, **doing LITTLE.**
4. Those who are apathetic about the great need of world evangelism and are indifferent to it, **doing NOTHING.**

❖ **Into which group would the Lord categorize Gideon, and more importantly, you?**