

Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TEACHER'S PACKET

3rd - 5th Grade

Sunday Morning

Study 21

Gideon... Through Faith Subdued Kingdoms

Gideon

The Objective is the key concept for this weeks lesson. It should be the main focus of the study

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The “Main passage” is the basis of the study, where the other verse support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the “reward box” found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God’s Word.

Objective To continue the study of Hebrews 11 by demonstrating the faith of Gideon and his 300 soldiers.

Key Verses

Hebrews 11:32-33

Judges 6:36-40

Judges 7

Memory Verse - Hebrews 10:23

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.”

Hook

Review last week’s memory verse, Acts 16:31.

As an introduction to the lesson, give the students a brief synopsis of Gideon testing the Lord with the fleece, asking for a demonstration of power to prove the Lord’s promise.

Ask the class, “How can we know what God wants us to do in *our* lives?”

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

Beginning in verse 32, Hebrews 11 begins to rattle off a number of examples of great faith in quick succession. It mentions some of the judges (Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah) and also David and Samson. We will not study the stories of everyone mentioned, but rather will pick out two stories of great faith from the examples given above.

In Judges 6, God had called Gideon to rise up against the Midianites, who had been terrorizing the land for 7 years. After testing the Lord with a fleece and receiving a promise that God would save Israel by Gideon's hand (6:36-40), he assembled an army of 32,000 men. The Lord determined that this number was too many, and after allowing anyone who is afraid to return home, only 10,000 remained. Again the Lord said that there were too many troops in Gideon's army and decreed that only the people who drank from the water by scooping the water into their mouths could go to war. The rest who bent their heads down into the water had to return home. This left Gideon with only 300 troops to fight against the Midianites and the Amalekites who were "as numerous as locusts; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the sea-shore in multitude" (7:12).

The Lord strengthened Gideon's faith by allowing him to overhear the dream of one of the soldiers, showing Gideon that the Lord was already causing fear and trouble amongst the enemy. Gideon divided his men up into three companies, who dispersed among the enemy at night. When everyone was sleeping, they blew their trumpets and lit their torches right amongst the Midianites. The Lord caused confusion and chaos among the Midianite soldiers, who took up their weapons and began to fight one another until the whole army had defeated itself.

LOOK

In 1836 in San Antonio Texas, 200 men defended the Alamo against an army of around 2,000 enemy soldiers. They fought bravely, but eventually they were overrun in what would be remembered as a heroic struggle against impossible odds. All of those men knew that they would lose that fight, but they stayed and fought anyway. 200 men simply could not fight against 2,000.

How did Gideon feel when the Lord took his army of 32,000 and told all but 300 of them to go home? If 200 has no chance against 2,000, what chance did Gideon's force of 300 men have against a Midianite army that was so big that it couldn't even be counted? What's more, Gideon's

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

LOOK (Continued)

troops were not going to be protected by walls or cities, and they would be attacking this enormous army.

Gideon had one thing that the soldiers at the Alamo did not have. Gideon had a promise from God that the Lord would save Israel by his hand. He didn't need a huge army, he had the strength of the Lord. He could trust in the promise that God had given to him.

The Lord was also incredible gracious to Gideon, He could have commanded him to go out to battle in the same way that the Lord told the Israelites to go up against Jericho, but the Lord gave Gideon something to strengthen his faith. When fear and doubt could have set in, God allowed Gideon to overhear a dream that proved to Gideon that God was working, and that He would give victory into the hands of the 300.

There are things in our lives that might seem daunting and overwhelming. You might feel like the problem you are facing is impossible, and that there is no way that you can gain victory. In those times take courage from the story of Gideon. This story teaches us that if we are doing what God has asked us to do, even if we feel outmanned and outgunned, the Lord will be with us. If we are following His leading and listening to His voice, then we can overcome anything.

Thankfully we don't need to lay fleeces on the ground and ask God to perform miracles to know that God is talking to us. God has already spoken to us, and His instruction for our lives is found in the Word of God. That is why reading Scripture, memorizing scripture, and studying the Bible is so important. It helps us to know when we are following God's will, or if we are following our own thoughts and desires.

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

TOOK

As a class, memorize Hebrews 10:23.

Ask the class to think about some of the things that God asks us to do in His Word (for example, love our neighbor). Show the class that with God's help we can do all of the things that God asks of us.

Pray: Thank the Lord that He will always do what He has promised to do. Praise Him for strengthening us and walking with us through difficult times. Ask Him to show us ways that we can live for Him everyday.

Parent Question: Why did God only allow Gideon to have 300 troops?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on Judges 7 by David Guzik

Judges 7 - The Battle Against Midian

A. Israel's small army is too big for God to use.

1. (1-3) God tells Gideon to tell all his soldiers who are afraid to go home.

Then Jerubbaal (that *is*, Gideon) and all the people who *were* with him rose early and encamped beside the well of Harod, so that the camp of the Midianites was on the north side of them by the hill of Moreh in the valley. And the LORD said to Gideon, "The people who *are* with you *are* too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel claim glory for itself against Me, saying, 'My own hand has saved me.' "Now therefore, proclaim in the hearing of the people, saying, 'Whoever *is* fearful and afraid, let him turn and depart at once from Mount Gilead.'" And twenty-two thousand of the people returned, and ten thousand remained.

a. **The people who are with you are too many for Me:** This was a great test of Gideon's faith. His army of 32,000 men was already overmatched by 135,000 Midianites. Yet God thought his army was *too big*, and He commanded Gideon to invite all who were afraid to go home. He was left with only 10,000 men.

i. Gideon was probably surprised at the number of men who were afraid to fight, and hoped that only a few hundred would leave. But we are told that they assembled in a place where they could see the 135,000 Midianite troops (Judges 7:8). The sight of a huge opposing army made many Israelite soldiers afraid.

b. **Lest Israel claim glory for itself against Me, saying "My own hand has saved me":** This explains *why* the army of 32,000 was too large. Israel could still take credit for a victory if they had 32,000 troops. They could believe they were underdogs who triumphed through their own great bravery or strategy. God wanted the odds so bad that the victory would clearly be His alone.

i. If we really believe the principle, *Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the LORD of hosts* (Zechariah 4:6), then our smallness does not matter. If we really believe the principle, *Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the name of the LORD our God* (Psalm 20:7), then smallness does not matter.

2. (4-8) Gideon must separate the men according to a particular test.

But 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. Then it will be, *that* of whom I say to you, 'This one shall go with you,' the same shall go with you; and of whomever I say to you, 'This one shall not go with you,' the same shall not go." So he brought the people down to the water. And the LORD said to Gideon, "Everyone who laps from the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall set apart by himself; likewise everyone who gets down on his knees to drink." And the number of those who lapped, *putting* their hand to their mouth, was three hundred men; but

all the rest of the people got down on their knees to drink water. Then the LORD said to Gideon, "By the three hundred men who lapped I will save you, and deliver the Midianites into your hand. Let all the *other* people go, every man to his place." So the people took provisions and their trumpets in their hands. And he sent away all *the rest of* Israel, every man to his tent, and retained those three hundred men. Now the camp of Midian was below him in the valley.

a. **The people are still too many:** God already reduced Gideon's army from 32,000 to 10,000. Here He reduced it from 10,000 to 300. He did this because 10,000 were **still too many** for God's purpose.

i. We rarely think that bigness can be a hindrance to the work of God. Yet it is harder to truly rely on God when we have many wonderful resources at hand. Though it certainly can be done, it is hard to be big and to rely only on the *LORD*. When we are big, it is possible to do a lot in human resources and "give the credit" to God.

ii. Paul was in danger of being too strong for his own good. Therefore, God brought a weakness into his life so that Paul would keep relying on the *LORD's* strength - and be stronger than ever (2 Corinthians 12:7-10).

b. **Bring them down to the water, and I will test them for you there:** This seems a strange test, and there are different ideas as to why God used this to separate the soldiers. Perhaps it was because those who cupped the water in their hands and brought it to their mouth were better soldiers because they kept their eyes on their surroundings even when taking a drink.

i. **As a dog laps:** The ancient Hebrew word for **laps** is *yalok*, used to imitate the sound a dog makes when lapping water.

ii. "The test was peculiarly military. Men in such a position were not on guard against sudden surprise." (Morgan)

iii. We might say that God eliminated the fearful and those who thought first only of convenience, the easy way. "The thought is disturbing, but it may well be true, that the composition of God's army to fight Satan's hosts in any day is really little different. How many Christians are so fearful of the enemy that they are of no real use in this warfare, and how many of the remainder are so self-centered, rather than God centered, that they find little place for effective ministry." (Wood)

c. **By the three hundred men who lapped I will save you, and deliver the Midianites into your hand:** God assured Gideon that victory was certain, even through only 300 men. Now the Israeli army was less than 1% of its original size and the proportion was 400 Midianite soldiers to each Israeli soldier. Gideon could only trust in God because there was nothing else to trust.

3. (9-11) Gideon must spy on the camp of the Midianites and find encouragement.

It happened on the same night that the LORD said to him, "Arise, go down against the camp, for I have delivered it into your hand. But if you are afraid to go down, go down to the camp with Purah your servant, and you shall hear what they say; and afterward your hands shall be strengthened to go down against the camp." Then he went down with Purah his servant to the outpost of the armed men who *were* in the camp.

a. **Arise, go down against the camp:** God wanted Gideon to find encouragement in this visit to the enemy's camp. This shows that when God asks us to do hard things for Him, He doesn't fold His arms and sit back and expect us to do it on our own. He is there to guide us and to keep us and to encourage us all along the way.

b. **Afterward your hands shall be strengthened to go down against the camp:** This is the tender mercy of God. He dealt with the doubts and fears of Gideon, and wanted to assure him.

4. (12-15) God reassures Gideon through the Midianites.

Now the Midianites and Amalekites, all the people of the East, were lying in the valley as numerous as locusts; and their camels *were* without number, as the sand by the seashore in multitude. And when Gideon had come, there was a man telling a dream to his companion. He said, "I have had a dream: *To my surprise*, a loaf of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian; it came to a tent and struck it so that it fell and overturned, and the tent collapsed." Then his companion answered and said, "This *is* nothing else but the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel! Into his hand God has delivered Midian and the whole camp." And so it was, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, that he worshiped. He returned to the camp of Israel, and said, "Arise, for the LORD has delivered the camp of Midian into your hand."

a. **A loaf of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian:** Only the very poor ate **barley bread**. The vision meant that the camp of the Midianites would be knocked over by a humble nobody.

i. "Barley-meal was rather food for dogs or cattle than for men; and therefore the barley cake would be the emblem of a thing despised." (Spurgeon)

ii. "A cake of barley bread might be a worthless thing; but if God were behind it, it would upset a tent!" (Meyer)

b. **This is nothing else but the sword of Gideon:** God allowed Gideon to see a great confirmation of His future work. This was obviously no coincidence and no display of luck. God used this situation to build the faith of Gideon, and it worked so well that all Gideon could do was worship God.

i. It was no accident that the man dreamed the dream that night; no accident that he told his friend about it at just that moment; no accident that Gideon came to the exact place where he overheard the man telling the dream.

ii. "I think if I had been Gideon I should have said to myself, 'I do not so much rejoice in what this dreamer saith as I do in the fact that he has told his dream at the moment when I was lurking near him: I see the hand of the Lord in this, and I am strengthened by the sight. Verily, I perceive that the Lord worketh all things with unfailing wisdom, and faileth not in his designs. He that has ordered this matter can order all things else.'" (Spurgeon)

iii. It must have built the faith of Gideon to know that his enemies were afraid of *him*. When we are weak in faith we often make our enemies stronger than they really are. We could say that the devil himself is afraid of the normal Christian - or at least afraid of what they *could* become.

iv. We should take it to heart; our enemies, both human and spiritual, are at their core *afraid of us*. "Behold the host of doubters, and heretics, and revilers, who, at the present time, have come up into the inheritance of Israel, hungry from their deserts of rationalism and atheism! They are eating up all the corn of the land. They cast a doubt upon all the verities of our faith. But we need not fear them; for if we heard their secret counsels, we should perceive that they are afraid of us. Their loud blusterings and their constant sneers, are the index of real fear. Those who preach the cross of our Lord Jesus are the terror of modern thinkers. In their heart of hearts they dread the preaching of the old-fashioned gospel, and they hate what they dread. On their beds they dream of the coming of some evangelist into their neighborhood. What the name of Richard was to the Saracens, that is the name of Moody to these boastful intellects." (Spurgeon)

c. **Arise, for the LORD has delivered the camp of Midian into your hand:** Gideon's encouragement was contagious. Having received encouragement, he could not help but spread that encouragement to others and his encouragement built their faith.

i. “But what a pity it is that we should need such little bits of things to cheer us up, when we have matters of far surer import to make us glad! Gideon had already received, by God’s own angel, the word, ‘Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.’ Was not this enough for him? Whence is it that a boy’s dream comforts him more than God’s own word.” (Spurgeon)

B. The army is small enough to be used by God to win the battle.

1. (16-18) Gideon announces a strange battle plan.

Then he divided the three hundred men *into* three companies, and he put a trumpet into every man’s hand, with empty pitchers, and torches inside the pitchers. And he said to them, “Look at me and do likewise; watch, and when I come to the edge of the camp you shall do as I do: When I blow the trumpet, I and all who *are* with me, then you also blow the trumpets on every side of the whole camp, and say, “*The sword of the LORD and of Gideon!*”

a. **He divided the three hundred men into three companies:** There is no specific mention that God gave Gideon this plan through supernatural revelation. Yet, because Gideon was a Spirit-filled man (Judges 6:34), the supernatural can operate very naturally in his life.

b. **Look at me and do likewise:** This plan probably came very naturally to Gideon, but upon reflection one can clearly see how the Holy Spirit prompted him.

2. (19-23) God strikes the army of Midian with a surprise attack.

So Gideon and the hundred men who *were* with him came to the outpost of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, just as they had posted the watch; and they blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers that *were* in their hands. Then 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 they cried, “The sword of the LORD and of Gideon!” And every man stood in his place all around the camp; and the whole army ran and cried out and fled. When the three hundred blew the trumpets, the LORD set every man’s sword against his companion throughout the whole camp; and the army fled to Beth Acacia, toward Zererah, as far as the border of Abel Meholah, by Tabbath. And the men of Israel gathered together from Naphtali, Asher, and all Manasseh, and pursued the Midianites.

a. **Then the three companies blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers:** The Midianite soldiers awoke to an explosion of noise, light, and movement coming down on them from all directions. No wonder they thought they were being attacked by an army even bigger than they were.

b. **And they cried, “The sword of the LORD and of Gideon!”** This cry was not the result of pride on Gideon’s part. Instead, it showed wisdom in the attack because clearly the Midianites were already afraid of **the sword of Gideon** (Judges 7:14), and shouting helped to send them into panic.

i. Perhaps the Midianites did not know who the LORD was, but they knew there was a man from the LORD named Gideon. It was appropriate for Gideon to take this leadership role.

c. **The LORD set every man’s sword against his companion throughout the whole camp:** The first phase of the battle wasn’t between Israel and Midian, but as the Midianites fought themselves. This is a good example of how we can be *more than conquerors through Him who loved us* (Romans 8:37). We get the spoils of victory though Jesus won the battle for us.

i. The early Christian writer Origen often emphasized elaborate spiritual meanings to Biblical accounts. In this

story he made the 300 men types of preachers of the gospel. Their trumpets were a picture of preaching Christ crucified. Their torchlights represented the holy conduct of the preachers.

ii. **And the men of Israel gathered together from Naphtali, Asher, and all Manasseh, and pursued the Midianites:** "If some have the courage to strike the enemy, there are others who will come out of their hiding-places to hunt the beaten foe. When you really want help, often you cannot get it; but when you can afford to do without assistance, you will sometimes be embarrassed by it." (Spurgeon)

3. (24-25) Working towards total defeat of Midian.

Then Gideon sent messengers throughout all the mountains of Ephraim, saying, "Come down against the Midianites, and seize from them the watering places as far as Beth Barah and the Jordan." Then all the men of Ephraim gathered together and seized the watering places as far as Beth Barah and the Jordan. And they captured two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb. They killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb they killed at the winepress of Zeeb. They pursued Midian and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon on the other side of the Jordan.

a. **Come down against the Midianites:** This was *not* unbelief on Gideon's part. Though God started the work with a small number of soldiers, once the work began, Gideon wanted many to get involved in the work.

b. **They pursued Midian:** God blessed the effort of people of Ephraim, and they made good success against the enemy and their leaders.