“Trusting God Against All Odds”
Hebrews 11:32-33/Judges 7:1-25

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Teaching Aim: To explore the circumstances surrounding one of the most unusual military victories of all-time. To recognize the reason for Gideon’s fear and relate it to our own experience with fear today. To recognize faith in God and obedience to His Word will lead us to triumphant victory over the enemy. To understand all things are possible when we put our faith in God!

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (BIBLE STUDY)
Part I: Israel will be victorious, but the glory belongs to God alone (Judg. 7:1-8)

1. Why was Gideon’s name (“Warrior”) changed to “Jerubbaal” in Judg. 6:32? What was the name of the “well” that Gideon and the rest of the Israelites were camping by (vs. 1)? What if any significance is there to the name of this well: “Harod?” (See Footnotes) What well known valley were the Midianite forces camped in? How far away were they camped from the Israelites?

2. Gideon must have felt frightened and overwhelmed by the thought of 32,000 Israelite soldiers facing an enemy coalition of 135,000 soldiers. What troubling words did God share with Gideon in verse 2? How do you think Gideon felt upon hearing this change of plans? Have you ever felt overwhelmed and frightened by your circumstances? If so, when?

3. What is “the gaze and glance” concept of prayer? How does it apply to the story of Gideon? How can we use “the gaze and glance” concept of prayer in our own lives today?

4. What Old Testament Law did God refer to in commanding Gideon to send home the soldiers who were afraid? (See Deut. 20:3-8) Why? According to this law, what other people should not go to war? Can fear be a good thing if it is channeled correctly? (See Prov. 1:7)
5. After the soldiers who were afraid left, only 10,000 Israelite soldiers remained. How did God respond to the 10,000 soldiers who stayed behind to fight (vs. 4)? What did God decide to do in testing the remaining soldiers (vv. 4-5)? Why do you think God chose this method to separate those that remained?

6. According to verse 6, how many people lapped up the water with their tongues like a dog? Is there any significance to these soldiers being compared to a dog?

7. What troubling announcement did the LORD make to Gideon in verse 7? What do you think Gideon felt like after being left with less than 1% of the small group of soldiers he started with? What major change took place in the Israelite camp in verse 8?

Part II: Gideon receives a fourth and final sign of confirmation (Judg. 7:9-15)

1. How long did God wait before putting Gideon and his remaining soldiers into action (vs. 9)? What promise did God make to Gideon? Did Gideon believe God or was he still frightened (vs. 10)? What did God have Gideon do in verses 10-11?

2. When is the last time you heard of a General being sent to an enemy camp to spy on them? Who did God allow to go with Gideon? Why? Have you ever had somebody walk through difficult times with you? How did the presence of that person help you?

3. What did the Jezreel Valley look like to Gideon and Purah his servant that night (vs. 12)? Do you think Gideon and Purah were frightened as they approached the camp? Why or why not? What frightens you? How do you handle your fears?
4. What did Gideon and Purah overhear as they moved closer to the enemy camp (vs. 13)?
What makes “a tumbling loaf of barley bread” a fitting image for the rag tag Israelites? What does the tent in this man’s dream symbolize?

5. How did the second Midianite soldier interpret the dream (vs. 14)? What can we learn about the knowledge of the Midianites from this passage? This was the message Gideon needed to hear for himself; God had supernaturally arranged this dream and interpretation in order to strengthen Gideon for the battle ahead? What are some ways that God has encouraged you through a word in difficult times? Note: Why is it that we are not willing to trust God’s Word, but we are willing to trust the word of others; in this case a Midianite?

6. How did Gideon respond to the interpretation of the Midianite’s dream (vs. 15a)? What is your reaction when God does something kind for you? What is your favorite way to worship God? Why should worship always come from a heart of gratitude?

7. What did Gideon do after this word of encouragement (vs. 15b)? The Midianite man’s dream and interpretation were the 4th of 4 signs God had given to Gideon proving that He keeps His word. What were the other three signs? (See Judg. 6:17-21, 36-40)

Part III: The battle belongs to the LORD (Judg. 7:16-25)

1. What nontraditional military tactic was used in verse 16? Why did this strategy (as inspired by God) require great precision and synergy from Gideon’s 300 soldiers (vv. 17-18)? What would have happened if even one of them had dropped their clay pot in the dark prematurely?
2. What time of the night was considered to be the middle watch (vs. 19)? (See Commentaries) What elements made this strategy work particularly well? How do we see “psychological warfare” being used against the Midianites (vs. 20)? What kind of horns were used? What was the importance of each element in this surprise attack?

3. Ironically the Israelites, though crying out “The sword of the LORD and of Gideon,” did not use their swords, the Midianites used their own on themselves. What great lesson in life can every Christian learn from 2 Cor. 12:9b-10? Why is “the furnace of affliction” a good place for Christians to be? How have you seen this truth played out in your own life?

4. Have you ever been suddenly awakened in the middle of the night to a crisis? What did it feel like? What happened in the Midianite camp as all 300 Israelites obeyed God and did what He commanded (vv. 21-22)? What does God promise if we are obedient? (See Deut. 28:1-2)

5. What happened as the sound of 300 ram horns blared from every direction (vs. 22)? Have you ever experienced a panic attack? What was it like? Were you thinking clearly? Note: Unknown languages may also have added to the panic as at least three different languages were spoken within the Midianite coalition.

6. Gideon called in reinforcements. What three Israeli tribes came to help Gideon pursue the Midianites (vs. 23)? Note: Some of the soldiers who had previously been dismissed may have joined in this pursuit. What additional tribe did Gideon call to for help (vs. 24)? Why?
7. What event took place at “the rock of Oreb” (vs. 25)? What happened at “the winepress of Zeeb?” Why do you think the rock and the winepress are named after the two princes of Midian? The story of Gideon began at a winepress in Judg. 6:11; where does it end (vs. 25)?

8. Gideon was afraid throughout this story until the very end. What applications can we find and apply to our own lives in this story of Gideon and the Midianite army?
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   2.
   3.
   4.
   5.

MINER’S CORNER ~ Manna to live by!
- No problem is too big for God!
- With obedience comes blessing, with disobedience cursing!
- God never tempts us to do evil, but He does “test” us to see if we will trust and obey Him?
- A country is not saved by the size of its army, it is saved by its faith and obedience to God!
- God often used dreams in the Bible to communicate truth about the future; in this story God does so through a couple of unaware Midianite soldiers!
- Through faith in God and by the mighty hand of God; Gideon’s little army of 300 soldiers defeated a coalition of over 135,000 enemy soldiers!
- It’s important to remember in the battles of life: “God plus you equal a majority!”