

## Gideon Part 2

So, last week when we left Gideon, he had just torn down the idols of his dad! God found him hiding in his fear, called a warrior out from within him, then commissioned him to go and tear down idols.

### **If I were an Ant**

**Show picture of an ant carrying food.** It is believed that an ant can lift up to 50 or as much as 100 times its body weight.

What would you be able to lift if you were an ant?

If you were an ant, you would be able to lift a small or a medium-sized car. Can you imagine that?  
I won't ask you to lift a car. How would you feel if someone asked you to pick up a car and you could?

God probably won't ask us to pick up a car, but sometimes God asks us to do things that look impossible. In our story today we'll find out that God asked Gideon to do something that seemed impossible. Gideon trusted God, and God gave him the strength to do it. God will give us the strength to do what He asks of us.

**[33-35] All the enemies of Israel got together, crossed the river, and made camp in the Valley of Jezreel. God's Spirit came over Gideon. He blew his ram's horn trumpet and the Abiezrites came out, ready to follow him. He dispatched messengers all through Manasseh, calling them to the battle; also, to Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali. They all came.**

Well, after this... vs. 33, the Midianites launch a massive assault on Israel, at which point the angel of God appears to Gideon again, and tells him to round up the warriors! Get them all together and get ready.

**[36-37] Gideon said to God, "If this is right, if you are using me to save Israel as you've said, then look: I'm placing a fleece of wool on the threshing floor. If dew is on the fleece only, but the floor is dry, then I know that you will use me to save Israel, as you said." [38] That's what happened. When he got up early the next morning, he wrung out the fleece—enough dew to fill a bowl with water!**

Then Gideon said, "Wait a minute, that was too easy. God, what I meant to say was, 'Let the fleece be dry, and the ground around it be wet.' That would be a real miracle."

**[39] Then Gideon said to God, "Don't be impatient with me, but let me say one more thing. I want to try another time with the fleece. But this time let the fleece stay dry, while the dew drenches the ground." [40] And God did so that night; and only the fleece was dry, and on all the ground there was dew.**

Ahh... the famous fleece test. What can we learn from this?

Gideon put out a fleece in order to strengthen his faith and boost his confidence that God indeed called him to do this mission! Gideon's request was for reassurance and was accompanied by genuine faith.

### **God understands us.**

He can handle our questions and handle us wanting to know if that was this really Him! I believe that all Christians have the right to ask God for reassurance in their walk of faith.

We have to understand that what God was calling Gideon to do was B I G. It was huge.

He was asking him to be a leader.

He was asking him to gather the people for war.

He was asking him to fight the enemy.

He was asking for his life.

I believe that if God is asking this of us, then we have the right to ask him! IS THIS FOR REAL?

Remember God found Gideon hiding. He found him in fear. So Gideon needed to make sure, God you are calling me to make me brave?

God doesn't call the brave; he makes the brave.

**When God comes to you, He never starts with what you are; He starts with what He intends for you to be.**

OOH THAT IS SO GOOD!

- "Moses, you will be a great speaker." "But God, I can't speak." "I will be your mouth."
- Maybe an even clearer example of this: Abraham: Sterile. Old. Father of many nations? Laughable.

Romans 4:17 says that faith is believing God when He calls into existence the things that do not yet exist.

Again, God sees past our failures, our messed-up lives and He speaks to the potential inside of us.

But God saw him differently. He said, "If you will believe my definition of you, and believe that I am with you, I will use my strength to help you deliver the nation from the enemy."

People see you one way, but God sees you as you are known in Heaven.

Who does God say you are?

Who is the real you?

Do you know? If you did know would you believe it?

The question is, "Will you believe Him?" or I should ask: **"Whose voice do you listen to?"**

Satan is the one who starts with who you are and what you've done and defines you by that.

He whispers, "You're a failure... Coward. Reject. Bum."

The crazy thing is he isn't wrong, yes, we used to be all those things... USED TO BE. Satan always accuses you of things you have done in your past.

God says, "My beloved. Righteous. Beloved. Mighty man of valor."

You say, "But God, I am none of those things." He says, "You will be."

One of the hardest things to do is tell the difference between voices. We have so many voices outside that are speaking into our lives. If you are anything like me sometimes that gets overwhelming. We have to figure out and decipher who is saying what.

**-Satan starts with what you've done and beats you up for it.**

**-God starts with who you can be and speaks to what you will do.**

So often we ask questions like, "God, why don't you do things like you used to do things?"

Why don't you do things in my life that are cool?" Gideon asks God the same question and God answers Gideon's question, "God, why don't you do awesome things for us like you used to do for our grandparents?"

God says, "Go in the strength that you have."

Are you asking, 'God, why aren't you active in my family?

On my campus?

In our community?"

Maybe God is saying to you, **'Go with what you got!'**

Courage is not the absence of fear; it is following God in the midst of fear. God's one line answer to Gideon's fear, his sense of inadequacy: "I am with you."

**God's presence with us is the greatest answer to our fear.**

Question:

-What would life be like, in any situation, if you knew God was with you?

-Going into surgery: "I am with you"

- Going into a new job, a new relationship: “I am with you”
- Going into a new place “I am with you”
- Going to talk to someone about Jesus: “I am with you”
- Dealing with a problem in your home: “I am with you”

That is how amazing our God is that He is with us!

So, then we find in Judges 7, it's go time! Time for war! Time for a fight. Time for Israel to win. We find that the enemy has lined up against Israel. But Israel is looking STRONG! Real strong. 32,000 men strong. That is a huge army.

Think about that! 32,000 men ready to fight, ready to go to war!

However, God does his thing again...

### Judges 7

[2-3] God said to Gideon, “You have too large an army with you. I can't turn Midian over to them like this—they'll take all the credit, saying, ‘I did it all myself,’ and forget about me. Make a public announcement: ‘Anyone afraid, anyone who has any qualms at all, may leave Mount Gilead now and go home.’” Twenty-two thousand headed for home. Ten thousand were left.

This is when you go... GOD! WHAT IN THE WORLD ARE YOU DOING???

“Whoever is fearful and trembling...” I wonder if Gideon tried to go with them. God was like, “Not you, Gideon.”

Now, you could actually make the argument that this may have been a smart move. 10,000 brave soldiers might be better than 32,000 where 2/3 are wimps. But the next part makes absolutely no sense....

[4-5] God said to Gideon: “There are still too many. Take them down to the stream and I'll make a final cut. When I say, ‘This one goes with you,’ he'll go. When I say, ‘This one doesn't go,’ he won't go.” So, Gideon took the troops down to the stream.

[5-6] God said to Gideon: “Everyone who laps with his tongue, the way a dog laps, set on one side. And everyone who kneels to drink, drinking with his face to the water, set to the other side.” Three hundred lapped with their tongues from their cupped hands. All the rest knelt to drink.

It was just a random test designed to get rid of 97% of the army. Think about this: God intentionally made the army small, God brought it down to 300 men!

Okay, I can only imagine the discouragement and the point that Gideon may be at. Like dang God, really? You did this to me? To my army what is going on?

After whittling down his army to only 300, God tells Gideon to go against the camp for God has given them into his hand. But look at verse 10. “But if you are afraid to go down...” God knows the fear Gideon has right now. If you are afraid, go down to the camp with your servant and listen to what they are saying at the camp. So, Gideon goes down and listens to the talk in the camp. A man in the camp was telling a dream about a **loaf of bread**.

I am dead serious.... A loaf of bread.... What team chooses this as its mascot? We're the “bread loafs!” But this bread loaf flattens a might tent. Now, I'm not much of a camper, and if you threw a piece of bread at a tent I set up, it just might fall over. But that wouldn't happen to a normal tent.

Not just bread but a barley loaf to boot. Barley was an inferior product to wheat. Much less value and not as highly esteemed. Gideon said: I'm the Least of the the Least. I'm a nobody. I'm the weakest of my clan and my clan is the weakest of the tribe. He was like that barley loaf that destroyed the Midianites

The interpretation of the camp is that God has given Midian into the hand of Gideon. When Gideon heard this, he worshipped the Lord (7:15). **Gideon returns to his 300 with the strength of the Lord and tells them to arise for the Lord has given Midian into their hands.** Gideon is weak but God gives him the strength he needs to obey the will of the Lord. All because of BREAD!

So, Gideon divides the men into 3 companies of 100 each, and gives each one a trumpet, a jar, and a torch. **NO SWORDS** He tells them, “He divided the three hundred men into three companies. He gave each man a trumpet and an empty jar, with a torch in the jar. He said, “Watch me and do what I do. When I get to the edge of the camp, do exactly what I do. When I and those with me blow the trumpets, you also, all around the camp, blow your trumpets and shout, ‘For God and for Gideon!’”

That’s the plan: torches, pots, horns and screaming... I TOLD YOU THIS STORY IS CRAZY...

So, here’s how this worked. Usually, a torch and a trumpet signified a whole battalion. HE PLACES THEM AROUND THE VALLEY... And the smashing of the jars would have sound like hundreds of thousands of swords being raised. So, in the dark, this wouldn’t have seemed like 300 men, it would have seemed like tens of thousands.

They did it at the beginning of the middle watch, which means that 1/3 of the Midianite army was returning to the camp from being on duty; 1/3 were getting up to go out on duty; and 1/3 were still fast asleep. Well, just at the moment the Israelites blow their trumpets, smash their jars and all these torches appear.

Everyone is groggy, it’s dark, and you have what seems like thousands of soldiers lining the canyon above you. And a bunch of soldiers are coming back into the camp. So you assume that these people coming back into the camp are attacking you, and, in the dark, they all kill each other. THE END.

**Sometimes it’s hard to trust.** Gideon was willing to believe God and go up against an army four times larger than his own. Trusting the Lord is a process that must be learned through experience. At times God takes the people He plans to use and places them in impossible situations—in that way, they discover He is faithful. We may prefer to acquire faith by reading a book, but the Lord knows the best classroom is a place of utter helplessness.

**Sometimes it doesn’t make sense.** The Israelites were already outnumbered, but God instructed Gideon to reduce the army to a mere 300 men. That made the odds 450 to one! Although God’s ways may seem illogical to us, His wisdom and power are far greater than ours, and His plan can be trusted.

**Sometimes we just need to obey and trust God.** Gideon’s army was so small that its men could in no way take credit for the victory. The Lord delights in demonstrating His awesome power and glory through our weakness and inadequacy. Think of life’s challenges as opportunities for the Lord to build your faith and prepare you for ministry. He uses those who are willing to obey Him even when the task seems illogical or impossible. And He takes pleasure in showing His faithfulness to those who trust in Him regardless of the situation.