

**“Gideon – Mighty Man of Valor”**  
**Judges 6-8**  
**Scripture Ref: Is 48:11; Matt 25:21**

<b>Enemy</b>	<b>Years of Bondage</b>	<b>Judge</b>	<b>Deliverance and Rest</b>	<b>Scripture Ref</b>
Mesopotamia	8	Othniel	40	3:7-11
Moab	18	Ehud	80	3:12-31
Canaan	20	Deborah	40	4:1-5:31
Midian	7	Gideon	40	6:1-8:28
Ammon	18	Jephthah	6	10:6-12:7
Philistia	40	Samson	20	13:1-16:31

**1. (OPEN...)**

- a. **How God can use a man if little faith – a man who was in fact a bit cowardly**

**Midianites Oppress Israel**

6:1 Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD. So the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian for seven years, 2 and the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel. Because of the Midianites, the children of Israel made for themselves the dens, the caves, and the strongholds which are in the mountains. 3 So it was, whenever Israel had sown, Midianites would come up; also Amalekites and the people of the East would come up against them. 4 Then they would encamp against them and destroy the produce of the earth as far as Gaza, and leave no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep nor ox nor donkey. 5 For they would come up with their livestock and their tents, coming in as numerous as locusts; both they and their camels were without number; and they would enter the land to destroy it. 6 So Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites, and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD.

- 2. **This is a different type of oppression – the Midianites didn’t invade and permanently occupy the land,**
  - a. **They just came at harvest time and destroyed all of their crops and animals**
  - b. **They were vandals!**
- 3. **Just like the Midianites, this is what sin does to our lives – it comes in and destroys – and then leaves!**
  - a. **Leaves us oppressed, impoverished, distressed.**
- 4. **Isreal cried out to the Lord – and God sent a prophet – to tell them where the problem was...**

**The Un-named Prophet**

7 And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried out to the LORD because of the Midianites, 8 that the **LORD sent a prophet** to the children of Israel, who said to them, "**Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'I brought you up from Egypt and brought you out of the house of bondage; 9 and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of all who oppressed you, and drove them out before you and gave you their land. 10 Also I said to you, 'I am the LORD your God; do not fear the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell.' But you have not obeyed My voice.'**"

5. The problem was not that the Midianites were **so strong**
  - a. The Israelites were **so wrong!**
  - b. Sometimes we get ourselves in a bind, and the first thing we want to do is blame someone else, look for the “bad guy”
  - c. Maybe there is a bad guy, but is that really our problem?

### **Gideon**

11 Now the **Angel of the LORD** came and sat under the terebinth tree which was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon threshed wheat in the winepress, in order to hide it from the Midianites. 12 And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him, and said to him, "**The LORD is with you, you mighty man of valor!**"

13 Gideon said to Him, "**O my lord, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about, saying, 'Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?' But now the LORD has forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.**"

14 Then the LORD turned to him and said, "Go in this might of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. **Have I not sent you?**"

15 So he said to Him, "O my Lord, how can I save Israel? Indeed **my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.**"

6. Gideon tells the Angel – “Man, I’m the runt of the litter”
  - a. When you go to buy a puppy, you look for the biggest and healthiest one – look for big paws!
  - b. Just like when Samuel went to the house of Jesse to choose Israel’s next king...
  - c. All of David’s brothers looked more “kingly”, but God looked in the heart and chose David.
  - d. This tells me something about the people God uses...

### **#1 God uses People who are humble**

7. Gideon was amazed that God would use him – which is an indicator that he was the right guy!
  - a. Some are like “it’s about time God noticed my talents!”
  - b. We think we are going to do great things for the Lord

- c. **But then – who gets the glory? God will not share His glory**

*Isa 48:11 And I will not give My glory to another.*

**8. “Man of valor” mocking?**

- a. **Like walking up to a skinny guy in the gym and saying “Man you are a monster, are you entering the bodybuilding comp?”**
- b. **That would be strange – but if you did that, and 5 years later the guy is winning all the competitions.... You would be a prophet!**

**9. But that is what God is able to do - God sees us for what we will be...**

- a. **We see a child drawing – God sees Van Gogh**
- b. **We see a kid with two left feet – God sees a NBA player**
- c. **We see a timid man, the least of his family, and God sees a man that He can use to defeat the enemies of Israel!**

**Gideon Needs a Sign**

16 And the LORD said to him, **“Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat the Midianites as one man.”**

17 Then he said to Him, **“If now I have found favor in Your sight, then show me a sign that it is You who talk with me.** 18 Do not depart from here, I pray, until I come to You and bring out my offering and set it before You.”

And He said, “I will wait until you come back.”

19 So Gideon went in and prepared a **young goat**, and unleavened bread from an ephah of flour. The meat he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot; and he brought them out to Him under the terebinth tree and presented them. 20 The Angel of God said to him, “Take the meat and the unleavened bread and lay them on this rock, and pour out the broth.” And he did so.

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 rose out of the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread.** And the Angel of the LORD departed out of his sight.

22 Now Gideon perceived that He was the Angel of the LORD. So Gideon said, “Alas, O Lord GOD! For I have seen the Angel of the LORD face to face.”

23 Then the LORD said to him, “Peace be with you; do not fear, you shall not die.” 24 So Gideon built an altar there to the LORD, and called it The-LORD-Is-Peace. To this day it is still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

**10. The first thing the Angel tells Gideon is “go get you’re your house in order” – and Gideon does it.**

**Gideon Destroys the Altar of Baal**

25 Now it came to pass the same night that the LORD said to him, **“Take your father’s young bull, the second bull of seven years old, and tear down the altar of Baal that your father has, and cut down the wooden image that is beside it; 26 and build an altar to the LORD your God on top of this rock in**

**the proper arrangement, and take the second bull and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the image which you shall cut down.**" 27 So Gideon took ten men from among his servants and did as the LORD had said to him. But because he feared his father's household and the men of the city too much to do it by day, he did it by night.

**11. We often want to see God work the miraculous, see His mighty hand, see Him work awesome things through us....**

- a. **But are we willing to be faithful in the small things?**
- b. **God uses people who are faithful in the little things**

***Matt 25:21** His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things,*

**12. Gideon's work started in his own home...**

- a. **There is a time for "giving" the sermon, and there is a time for "living" the sermon.**
- b. **I'd say Gideon is now "living the sermon!"**

**13. It would seem that Gideon's action had an impact on his father's faith.**

28 And when the **men of the city** arose early in the morning, there was the altar of Baal, torn down; and the wooden image that was beside it was cut down, and the second bull was being offered on the altar which had been built. 29 So they said to one another, "**Who has done this thing?**" And when they had inquired and asked, they said, "Gideon the son of Joash has done this thing." 30 Then the men of the city said to Joash, "Bring out your son, that he may die, because he has torn down the altar of Baal, and because he has cut down the wooden image that was beside it."

31 But Joash said to all who stood against him, "**Would you plead for Baal?** Would you save him? Let the one who would plead for him be put to death by morning! If he is a god, let him plead for himself, because his altar has been torn down!" 32 Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal, saying, "Let Baal plead against him, because he has torn down his altar."

### **Doing a Lot with a Little**

33 Then all the Midianites and Amalekites, the people of the East, gathered together; and they crossed over and encamped in the Valley of Jezreel. **(130,000)** 34 **But the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon; then he blew the trumpet, and the Abiezrites gathered behind him.** 35 And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh, who also gathered behind him. He also sent messengers to Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali; and they came up to meet them.

### **Gideon Needs Another Sign**

**14. Sometimes you will hear Christians talking about “fleece”, and this is where it comes from.**

36 So Gideon said to God, **"If You will save Israel by my hand as You have said -- 37 look, I shall put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor;** if there is dew on the fleece only, and it is dry on all the ground, then I shall know that You will save Israel by my hand, as You have said." 38 And it was so. When he rose early the next morning and squeezed the fleece together, he wrung the dew out of the fleece, a bowlful of water. 39 Then Gideon said to God, "Do not be angry with me, but let me speak just once more: Let me test, I pray, just once more with the fleece; let it now be dry only on the fleece, but on all the ground let there be dew." 40 And God did so that night. It was dry on the fleece only, but there was dew on all the ground.

**15. The point of this is that Gideon was unsure of whether God was going to come through**

- a. **It was not a question of whether God will truly telling him to go and do this...**

**16. So the question become for you and I: Is asking for a “fleece sign” from God something a Christian should do?**

- a. **Twice in the Book of Matthew we find the Lord Jesus teaching that asking for signs was not a commendable attitude towards God.**
- b. **In fact, He said on both occasions (Matthew 12:39 and 16:4) that "an evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign."**
- c. **Obviously, the motives behind an evil and adulterous generation seeking a sign from God would be different from the motives of a believer wanting a sign from God.**
- d. **However, the Bible indicates that even a believer is evidencing an immature faith when he needs signs.**
- e. **Remember that our Lord rebuked the lack of faith of "doubting Thomas" with the statement, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" (John 20:29).**

**17. And in fact – the sign that Gideon asked for was not enough, after the first fleece was answered, he asked for another!**

- a. **And he went back on his word in asking for the second!**
- b. **“then I shall know that You will save Israel by my hand, as You have said” (Note – as you have said!)**

**18. Basically what we see is that Gideon was not operating on the basis of a strong and secure faith,**

- a. **...but rather on the basis of a weak and insecure faith**
- b. **So...if that is the case, why did God answer, and why did God not call Gideon to account?**

- c. **Just as parents will sometimes accommodate themselves to their young children's clinging and fearful requests for assurance or affirmation, so God will accommodate us at times to the requests of our feeble faith.**
19. **The point that we might bring away is that it is not necessarily wrong to put out fleeces or that it is wrong to ask God for signs,**
- a. **But that the account of Gideon and the fleece is included in Scripture to show us that it is the unsure, wavering faith that desires signs and it is usually the timid, immature believer who sets out fleeces.**
20. **But another encouraging lesson that we don't want to miss in the story of Gideon and the fleece is that God tolerates our lack of faith and continues to work with us in spite of our immature faith.**
- a. **He may even give us the signs we ask for in order to bolster our weak faith!**
21. **We also need to know that Gideon was not without faith.**
- a. **When God told Gideon to tear down his father's pagan altar, by faith Gideon obeyed (6:25-27).**
  - b. **Because he was too afraid to do the job by day, he did it by night. But he still did it!**

### **Gideon's Valiant Three Hundred**

22. **There was a movie titled "300" about the Spartan King Leonides and 300 Spartans who decided to fight to the last man against Persian 'God-King' Xerxes and his 1 million soldiers**
- a. **The movie wasn't 100% accurate, actually there were about 1500 Greeks, Helots. Thespians who held the pass for two days and then were cut down**
  - b. **But it was a heroic fight nonetheless**
23. **Well – this is the "REAL 300"!**

7:1 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.

2 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.'**" 3 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.

24. **I wonder, after feeling encouraged that God really was with him, to have God look down at Midian's army of 135K, and at Gideon's army of 32K**

a. **And say – “hmm – too many!”**

**25. “Whoever is a fraidy-cat, you can go home! 22K leave!**

a. **“Ok, well see you – we’ll pray for you!”**

**26. Note – fear is contagious.... God was doing some cleaning house.**

a. **Sometimes people leave the army – not always a bad thing!**

4 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." 5 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**." 6 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.

**27. “Lazy lappers” vs “careful cuppers”**

a. **or – maybe these were the older guys that couldn’t get down on their knees!**

**28. God thinned out the flock...**

a. **Jesus when He fed the 5000 – the people were not there because they loved Jesus – it was free lunch!**

b. **So Jesus gave them some things to chew on – sacrifice, dedication, surrender... and most left after that.**

c. **He intentionally thinned the flock – God can do more with 300 dedicated men than 30,000 half-hearted men.**

**29. Paul was in danger of being too strong for his own good - so God brought a weakness into his life, so that Paul would keep relying on the LORD's strength - and be stronger than ever**

7 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." 8 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.

9 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. 10 But if you are afraid to go down, go down to the camp with Purah your servant, 11 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. 12 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.

13 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.**"

**14 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."**

15 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." 16 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. 17 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: 18 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!'**"

19 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. 20 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!" 21 And every man stood in his place all around the camp; and **the whole army ran and cried out and fled**. 22 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.

23 And the men of Israel gathered together from Naphtali, Asher, and all Manasseh, and pursued the Midianites.

**24 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. 25 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.

### **Gideon Subdues the Midianites**

8:1 Now the **men of Ephraim** said to him, "**Why have you done this to us by not calling us when you went to fight with the Midianites?**" And they reprimanded him sharply.

2 So he said to them, "**What have I done now in comparison with you? Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer?**" 3 God has delivered into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb. And what was I able to do in comparison with you?" Then their anger toward him subsided when he said that.

**Succoth and Penuel**

4 When Gideon came to the Jordan, he and the three hundred men who were with him crossed over, exhausted but still in pursuit. 5 Then he said to the men of Succoth, "**Please give loaves of bread to the people who follow me, for they are exhausted,** and I am pursuing Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of Midian."

6 And the leaders of Succoth said, "**Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in your hand, that we should give bread to your army?**"

7 So Gideon said, "For this cause, when the LORD has delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into my hand, then I will **tear your flesh with the thorns** of the wilderness and with briers!" 8 **Then he went up from there to Penuel** and spoke to them in the same way. And the men of Penuel answered him as the men of Succoth had answered. 9 So he also spoke to the men of Penuel, saying, "When I come back in peace, I will tear down this tower!"

10 Now Zebah and Zalmunna were at Karkor, and their armies with them, about fifteen thousand, all who were left of all the army of the people of the East; for one hundred and twenty thousand men who drew the sword had fallen. 11 Then Gideon went up by the road of those who dwell in tents on the east of Nobah and Jogbehah; and he attacked the army while the camp felt secure. 12 When Zebah and Zalmunna fled, he pursued them; and he took the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and routed the whole army.

13 Then Gideon the son of Joash returned from battle, from the Ascent of Heres.

14 And he **caught a young man of the men of Succoth** and interrogated him; and he wrote down for him the leaders of Succoth and its elders, seventy-seven men. 15 Then he came to the men of Succoth and said, "Here are Zebah and Zalmunna, about whom you ridiculed me, saying, 'Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in your hand, that we should give bread to your weary men?'" 16 **And he took the elders of the city, and thorns of the wilderness and briers, and with them he taugth the men of Succoth. 17 Then he tore down the tower of Penuel and killed the men of the city.**

18 And he said to Zebah and Zalmunna, "What kind of men were they whom you killed at Tabor?"

So they answered, "As you are, so were they; each one resembled the son of a king."

19 Then he said, "They were my brothers, the sons of my mother. As the LORD lives, if you had let them live, I would not kill you." 20 And he said to Jether his firstborn, "Rise, kill them!" But the youth would not draw his sword; for he was afraid, because he was still a youth.

21 So Zebah and Zalmunna said, "Rise yourself, and kill us; for as a man is, so is his strength." So Gideon arose and killed Zebah and Zalmunna, and took the **crescent ornaments** that were on their camels' necks.

**30. crescent ornaments – Hebrew a “moon, crescent” - gives us an idea of where Islam originates – the Canaanites gods...**

**31. This is the high point of Gideons life, but not the end of the story...**

### **Gideon's Refuses the Kingship**

22 Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, "Rule over us, both you and your son, and your grandson also; for you have delivered us from the hand of Midian."

23 But Gideon said to them, "I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you; the LORD shall rule over you."

### **Gideon's Golden Ephod**

24 Then Gideon said to them, "**I would like to make a request of you, that each of you would give me the earrings from his plunder.**" For they had golden earrings, because they were Ishmaelites.

25 So they answered, "We will gladly give them." And they spread out a garment, and each man threw into it the earrings from his plunder. 26 Now the weight of the gold earrings that he requested **was one thousand seven hundred shekels of gold (about 50 lbs)**, besides the crescent ornaments, pendants, and purple robes which were on the kings of Midian, and besides the chains that were around their camels' necks. 27 Then Gideon made it into an ephod and set it up in his city, Ophrah. And all Israel played the harlot with it there. It became a snare to Gideon and to his house.

28 Thus Midian was subdued before the children of Israel, so that they lifted their heads no more. And the country was quiet for forty years in the days of Gideon.

### **Death of Gideon**

29 Then Jerubbaal the son of Joash went and dwelt in his own house. 30 Gideon had **seventy sons** who were his own offspring, for he had **many wives**. 31 And his concubine who was in Shechem also bore him a son, whose name he called **Abimelech (My Father is the King)**. 32 Now Gideon the son of Joash died at a good old age, and was buried in the tomb of Joash his father, in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

33 So it was, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel again played the harlot with the Baals, and made Baal-Berith their god. 34 Thus the children of Israel did not remember the LORD their God, who had delivered them from the hands of all their enemies on every side; 35 nor did they show kindness to the house of Jerubbaal (Gideon) in accordance with the good he had done for Israel.

### **32. God does His work through the most unexpected people**

- a. **God is looking – looking for people that He might use...**
- b. **Like Gideon – maybe small in their own eyes –**

**c. God chose a “nobody” to be a “somebody”**

**33. If you're going to blow a horn – blow a trumpet for God!**

**34. Start with being faithful in the small things – are there altars that need to be torn down?**

**35. Start with your own home – how is your home, your marriage?**

- a. Maybe your marriage is all messed up, and you're so consumed with it, you can never be used by God – you're too pre-occupied!**
- b. Brilliant tactic of the enemy – get your marriage all messed up – and you are taken out of the game**
- c. Wedlock is a padlock – my wife has never considered divorcing me – murder yes, divorce no!**

**36. Start with your ministry – whatever God has given you – execute it in faith and trust.**

**37. But we also need to remember that one battle does not win a war**

- a. One victory does not set us for life**
- b. History is full of people that started out well, but fell away later, and Gideon is one of those men.**

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