

Gideon's 300

Judges 7:1-22

Intro:

- Background- The Book of Judges is a part of Israel's history in the promised land, before the period of the kingdom was established. When reading this book you notice a continuing cycle: Israel enjoys the blessings of God but gets complacent and turns to idols (Judges 6:1), God allows a nation to come and judge and oppress them (6:2), they repent and cry out to God (6:6), God raises up a deliverer/judge who defeats the enemy and brings peace and blessing once again, soon Israel goes back into sin- wash, rinse, repeat.
- The sad thing is that this wasn't just a cycle, it was more of a downward spiral- each time Israel sunk lower and lower in their sin and idolatry. Eventually the last verse in Judges tells us: every man did that which was right in his own eyes. This also sums up the spirit of our age! This is the prevailing philosophy of our culture- do whatever feels good to you! You are basically your own god, with a set of standards that conveniently change to make you feel good!
- That's a shame, but thankfully, Judges also shows us God's mercy and deliverance!
- Here in our text we find Gideon, Israel's sixth Judge.
- God's deliverer- Judges 6:11-16
- God raises up a Judge to lead his people to victory
- More space is devoted to Gideon in the book of Judges than to any other judge, with Samson being a close second.
 - Gideon was just a common man with an impossible task
 - V. 14- God called him to achieve this task, and told him what to do! He was not presumptuous- telling God what to do. He even confirmed that God was taking the lead
 - V. 16- the key- God's presence "I will be with thee"

- Gideon gets rid of the Baal worship, and rallies the troops to fight Midian
- He's even given a nickname: Jerubbaal: Let Baal plead for himself (defend himself)

I. **MAN'S BEST EFFORTS**

- a. Self-righteousness vs. God's righteousness-
 - i. Two types of people in this world (working for righteousness, trusting in God's righteousness)
 - ii. II Cor. 5:21- For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him
 - iii. Judges 6:34- No self dependence, Spirit-dependence!
- b. Preparation for battle against Midianites (mean strife)
 - i. Judges 7:3b, 8:10- Gideon's faith was tested. Let's do some math- 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.
 - ii. The initial odds were almost 1 to 4- even bro. Garry couldn't beat those odds
 - iii. When we go to do battle against the world/flesh/devil we must realize that in our own flesh the odds are stacked against us! Learn to be strong in the power of **His** might!
 - iv. Gideon must've thought- too few, God thought- too many!
 - v. 22,000 walk away with fear- cowardly
 - 1. Many people don't serve God because of fear
 - 2. Fear of man bringeth a snare!
 - 3. Ex. Singing, preaching/teaching, witnessing, etc.
 - vi. God cut the army down even further to Gideon's 300 (7:4-7). He separated the one group that took time to get on their knees and drink the water.

- vii. This seems like a strange test! Perhaps these 300 men were more vigilant. Maybe they were able to quickly get down to drink with their hands while still keeping their heads upright to see any possible movement of the enemy.
- viii. Cut out the unnecessary. Some things are wrong, and some things are just unnecessary!- Hebrews 12:1- Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.”
- ix. Everyone is a blessing: some when they come into your life, others when they leave!

II. **GOD’S BATTLE-PLAN**

- a. Numbers/majority do not equal victory! God has always worked through a remnant!
- b. “...For there is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few.”- Jonathan
- c. Letting God fight your battles
 - i. Takes faith!- Exodus 14:14 - The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.
 - ii. Zech 4:6- Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.
 - iii. Psalm 20:7- Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God.
 - iv. V. 7-9- Note, Faith in God is not passive- Arise!
- d. V. 11-15- Gideon spies on the camp of the Midianites and finds encouragement
- e. Gideon overheard two Midianite soldiers talking about a dream. In the Midianite soldier's dream, the cake of barley bread represented Gideon and his 300 men (7:11-13).
- f. Only the very poor ate barley bread. The vision meant that the camp of the Midianites would be knocked over by a humble nobody.

- g. The interpretation greatly encouraged Gideon and gave him the assurance he needed
- h. Finding encouragement- (don't wait for a dream- church, Bible!)
- i. God allowed Gideon to see a great confirmation of His future work. God used this situation to build the faith of Gideon, and it worked so well that all Gideon could do was worship God.
- j. Ready to step out in faith
 - i. He divided the three hundred men into three companies and attacked
 - ii. The Midianite soldiers awoke to an explosion of noise, light and fled!
 - iii. What weapons did they use? Judges 7:16- Each man had a trumpet and clay pitcher with lamps inside (7:16).
 - iv. The weapons of our warfare today?- II Cor. 10:3-4- For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

III. GOD'S GLORY

- a. God wanted the odds so bad that the victory would clearly be His alone.
- b. Illustr- credit where credit is due- illustr new baby and my wife
- c. A miracle- 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.
- d. Chorus: God can do anything...but fail!
 - i. Little is much when God is in it!
 - ii. If God sends you, you will find His presence, and a retreating enemy!
 - iii. James 4:7- Submit yourselves therefore to God, resist the devil and he will flee from you
- e. Recognize that God's glory is at stake in many things, but especially in your personal walk with God. Defeat those Midianites in your life!

- f. Instead of seeing ourselves in Gideon and his army- we should see Christ and how he wants to use us just like these weapons
- g. This story is a great picture of our work today in overthrowing the armies of Satan by the preaching of the gospel. God used the foolish things to confound the wise. The Bible is our sword! We must go forth and sound the trumpet of the Gospel!
- h. Notice the weapons: it says these were "empty pitchers."
- i. These empty pitchers represent the bodies of believers. They must be emptied before God can use them.
- j. The pitchers had to be empty. The songwriter wrote, "Emptied that Thou mightest fill me, A clean vessel in Thy hand..."
- k. See II Cor. 4:6-7- God wants to use us!
- l. These pitchers were only empty in order to hold the light (7:16b; cf. II Cor. 4:6). It is not our light that must shine, but the light of the Christ (the Light of the world)
- m. Then please see, they had to be broken before the light could shine forth! Many Christians are not broken and humble so the light isn't shining. God's trying to bring the light out!

Conclusion: What are the Midianites in your life? Are you following God's battle-plan for victory? Has God given you hope to stop trusting in yourself and only in His strength? Take steps of faith to find victory. Are you allowing yourself to be a vessel that God can use for his glory?