

Judges 7:2-15

2 The LORD said to Gideon, “You have too many men for me to deliver Midian into their hands. In order that Israel may not boast against me that her own strength has saved her,

3 announce now to the people, ‘Anyone who trembles with fear may turn back and leave Mount Gilead.’” So twenty-two thousand men left, while ten thousand remained.

4 But the LORD said to Gideon, “There are still too many men. Take them down to the water, and I will sift them for you there. If I say, ‘This one shall go with you,’ he shall go; but if I say, ‘This one shall not go with you,’ he shall not go.”

5 So Gideon took the men down to the water. There the LORD told him, “Separate those who lap the water with their tongues like a dog from those who kneel down to drink.”

6 Three hundred men lapped with their hands to their mouths. All the rest got down on their knees to drink.

7 The LORD said to Gideon, “With the three hundred men that lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hands. Let all the other men go, each to his own place.”

8 So Gideon sent the rest of the Israelites to their tents but kept the three hundred, who took over the provisions and trumpets of the others. Now the camp of Midian lay below him in the valley.

9 During that night the LORD said to Gideon, “Get up, go down against the camp, because I am going to give it into your hands.

10 If you are afraid to attack, go down to the camp with your servant Purah

11 and listen to what they are saying. Afterward, you will be encouraged to attack the camp.” So he and Purah his servant went down to the outposts of the camp.

12 The Midianites, the Amalekites and all the other eastern peoples had settled in the valley, thick as locusts. Their camels could no more be counted than the sand on the seashore.

13 Gideon arrived just as a man was telling a friend his dream. “I had a dream,” he was saying. “A round loaf of barley bread came tumbling into the Midianite camp. It struck the tent with such force that the tent overturned and collapsed.”

14 His friend responded, “This can be nothing other than the sword of Gideon son of Joash, the Israelite. God has given the Midianites and the whole camp into his hands.”

15 When Gideon heard the dream and its interpretation, he worshiped God. He returned to the camp of Israel and called out, “Get up! The LORD has given the Midianite camp into your hands.”

07-07-01-The Trial of Gideon’s Trust
testing, faith, obedience, spiritual warfare
Judges 7:2-15

In spiritual warfare, our stance must be one of complete trust in God.

INTRODUCTION:

–Gideon’s story sets *human weakness* right beside a *call to warfare*.

God called Gideon to *fight against pagan soldiers*. *But what about us?*

Eph 6:12 says, “our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” **Our calling** is to *spiritual warfare*.

–Gideon wanted assurances for his faith, so God gave them. But God would *now* test the quality of his faith. He often does that with us too. *Why?* Because **HOM.idea**. God’s signs put Gideon in a place of owing God complete trust. Now God would serve notice on the debt...

- I. God Removed Gideon’s False Trust—v.2-3**, *The LORD said to Gideon, “You have too many men for me to deliver Midian into their hands. In order that Israel may not boast against me that her own strength has saved her, announce now to the people, ‘Anyone who trembles with fear may turn back and leave Mount Gilead.’” So twenty-two thousand men left, while ten thousand remained.*
- A. If the 32,000 soldiers that Gideon rallied boosted his confidence, losing 22,000 might have made him think, “If I wasn’t in charge, I could have gotten out of this as one of those ‘who trembles with fear!’”
- B. 10,000 against [we find out later] 135,000! But numbers aren’t the issue—**Deut 20:1**, When you go to war against your enemies and see horses and chariots and an army greater than yours, do not be afraid of them, because the LORD your God, who brought you up out of Egypt, will be with you.

TRANS: [Years ago, church growth books told us to adapt to culturally *felt needs*. It was a *fad that flopped*... a *false trust*. Culture-based *felt needs* aren’t the real needs diagnosed by God. People need their souls healed, and **Psa 107:20** (ESV) says, “*He sent out his word and healed them, and delivered them from their destruction.*”] God removes our *false trusts* before He gives us *spiritual victory*. He also gains more glory *in* that victory when the odds aren’t in our favor. So...

- II. God Removed Gideon’s Odds of Success—v.4-8**, *But the LORD said to Gideon, “There are still too many men. Take them down to the water, and I will sift them for you there. If I say, ‘This one shall go with you,’ he shall go; but if I*

say, 'This one shall not go with you,' he shall not go." So Gideon took the men down to the water. There the LORD told him, "Separate those who lap the water with their tongues like a dog from those who kneel down to drink." Three hundred men **lapped with their hands to their mouths**. All the rest got down on their knees to drink. The LORD said to Gideon, "With the three hundred men that lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hands. Let all the other men go, each to his own place." So Gideon sent the rest of the Israelites to their tents but kept the three hundred, who took over the provisions and trumpets of the others. Now the camp of Midian lay below him in the valley.

- A. God's extreme troop-reduction left Gideon without any reliance on numbers or favorable odds. **Why did God do this? In spiritual warfare, our stance must be one of complete trust in God.**
- B. Did God pick those who didn't "kneel down to drink" for a reason?
1. Soldiers who stayed on their feet to drink, scooping up water "with their hands to their mouths" could maintain *visual alertness*.
 2. This story is about *spiritual warfare*— **Eph 6:13**. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to **stand your ground**, and after you have done everything, to **stand**.

TRANS: For *spiritual victory*, we have to "stand [our] ground," *trusting in God's promises and following His directives*. So, the Lord, knowing our state of frailty, fear and doubt, doesn't just leave us in that state...

III. God Removed Gideon's Wavering Trust— v.9-15, *During that night the LORD said to Gideon, "Get up, go down against the camp, because I am going to give it into your hands. If you are afraid to attack, go down to the camp with your servant Purah and listen to what they are saying. Afterward, you will be encouraged to attack the camp." So he and Purah his servant went down to the outposts of the camp. The Midianites, the Amalekites and all the other eastern peoples had settled in the valley, thick as locusts. Their camels could no more be counted than the sand on the seashore. Gideon arrived just as a man was telling a friend his dream. "I had a dream," he was saying. "A round loaf of barley bread came tumbling into the Midianite camp. It struck the tent with such force that the tent overturned and collapsed." His friend responded, "This can be nothing other than the sword of Gideon son of Joash, the Israelite. God has given the Midianites and the whole camp into his hands." When Gideon heard the dream and its interpretation, he worshiped God. He returned to the camp of Israel and called out, "Get up! The LORD has given the Midianite camp into your hands."*

- A. God knows we can be *mighty warriors*," but **Psa 103:14** also says, "He knows our **frame**; He remembers that we are dust," so He told Gideon, "*If you are afraid, I'll encourage your faith.*" (We're freed from an

anxious, fearful "frame" of mind when we love God with complete trust— 1 John 4:18a, There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear.)

- B. Though "afraid," Gideon *bravely acted upon God's offer*. (He *did* feel "encouraged" but also might have felt guilty for how it took a human "dream" to dispel his fears, instead of God's own promise.)
- C. Finally, this last sign did cause Gideon's fearful heart to change:
1. It increased his love for God, because afterwards, it says, "*he worshiped God.*" [In **Fr.**, *worship = adore, to love supremely, to worship.*]
 2. It inspired a new faith confession, which he gave to his tiny troop of 300: "*Get up! The LORD has given the Midianite camp into your hands.*"
 3. It infused him with courage! (He was *doubtful, fearful, insecure*, no longer, but the "mighty warrior" God called him to be.

CONCLUSION:

—Gideon's story is our story. God wants us to have a *love-tie* with Him that *casts out fear*; a *faith-relationship* with Him that *brings us victory*, because we're **in spiritual warfare**, where **our stance must be one of complete trust in Him**.

— Although we're slow in learning to worship God lovingly and to trust Him completely, He keeps working with us patiently and persistently, until we become the *mighty warriors* He sees in us and calls us to be.