



## Sermon Notes

September 9, 2007

Tim Strickland

### Journey Through Judges #9 *The Lord Gives the Victory* Judges 7

**Judges 7:1-8** Then Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) and all the people who were with him rose early and encamped beside the spring of Harod. And the camp of Midian was north of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley.

[2] The Lord said to Gideon, "The people with you are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hand, lest Israel boast over me, saying, 'My own hand has saved me.' [3] Now therefore proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, 'Whoever is fearful and trembling, let him return home and hurry away from Mount Gilead.' " Then 22,000 of the people returned, and 10,000 remained.

[4] And the Lord said to Gideon, "The people are still too many. Take them down to the water, and I will test them for you there, and anyone of whom I say to you, 'This one shall go with you,' shall go with you, and anyone of whom I say to you, 'This one shall not go with you,' shall not go." [5] So he brought the people down to the water. And the Lord said to Gideon, "Every one who laps the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall set by himself. Likewise, every one who kneels down to drink." [6] And the number of those who lapped, putting their hands to their mouths, was 300 men, but all the rest of the people knelt down to drink water. [7] And the Lord said to Gideon, "With the 300 men who lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hand, and let all the others go every man to his home." [8] So the people took provisions in their hands, and their trumpets. And he sent all the rest of Israel every man to his tent, but retained the 300 men. And the camp of Midian was below him in the valley.

### Introduction (1)

The Eve of Battle

- 32,000 Israelites (7:1) vs. 135, 000 Midianites (8:10) and lots of camels (7:12)

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#### 1. The Lord gives the victory so the Lord gets the glory! (2)

The Lord is concerned that Israel will *"boast over me, saying, 'My own hand has saved me' "*

- **Our natural tendency is to try to take credit for God's work**
  - The Men of Israel would later give Gideon the credit for the victory
    - Judges 8:22 *"Rule over us...for you have saved us from the hand of Midan"*
  - The Lord warns against taking credit for His work
    - Israel - Deut. 8:11-20, esp. v17-18
    - The king of Assyria – Isaiah 10:12-27, esp v11-12, 15
- **The Lord commands that our boasting be in Him**
  - **1 Cor. 1:26-31** – *"Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord"*
- **God does not give his glory to anyone else**
  - Is. 42:8, *"My glory I give to no other"*, also 48:11

#### 2. The Lord increases your reliance upon Him by making you weak (3-8)

- a. Operation Army Reduction Part 1: If you're scared...go home! (3)
  - Spring of Harod (v1) – Harod means "trembling"
  - See Deut. 20:1-9, esp. v8
  - 22,000 out of 32,000 leave! Only 10,000 left!
- b. Operation Army Reduction Part 2: A drinking test (4-7)
  - 9,700 kneel to drink and are sent home, 300 lap like a dog and stay
  - Gideon's army has now been reduced from 32,000 to 300
- c. **This weak, pathetic army**, now less than 1% of its original size, armed with torches and trumpets, **is now the perfect size for God to use them** to save Israel and bring Him glory (7)
  - **2 Cor. 12:9-10** *But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. [10] For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

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**3. The Lord offers you courage when you are weak... (9-15)**

- a. God gives Gideon one more sign
  - Gideon and Purah sneak down to the Midianite camp
  - They overhear a Midianite share a dream with his comrade
    - It is a strange dream: a cake of barley bread rolls into the Midianite camp, and knocks a tent over
    - **Judges 7:14** *And his comrade answered, "This is no other than the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel; God has given into his hand Midian and all the camp."*
      - The Midianites know his name and fear God
- b. Gideon worships God after hearing this interpretation (15)
  - God's sovereignty is seen yet again in this sign
  - Gideon is finally convinced by the sign that was given to him by God (not by the three signs he had requested!), and he is convinced through the voice of a Midianite!
    - The usual purpose of signs is to authenticate God Himself and His Word. Signs move people from doubt to faith in God and His Word.

**4. The Lord will give you the victory as you obey Him in faith (16-25)**

- a. Gideon's Plan (16-18)
  - Three companies of 100 men, each with jars, torches trumpets
  - Gideon commands them to go and surround the Midianite camp, and "do as I do". Blow your trumpets and shout!
- b. The Lord gives the victory as Gideon obeys in faith (19-22)
  - They arrive at the perfect time – the change of guard around 10:30pm
  - They smash their jars, light their torches and shout "A sword for the Lord and for Gideon!"
  - The Lord causes the Midianites to attack one another (22)
- c. The Pursuit (23-25)
  - Gideon calls for reinforcements, who pursue and kill many Midianites, including two of their captains

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**Our Response**

1. Always give God the credit for His work in and through you!

**Deuteronomy 8:17** *Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.'*

**Proverbs 21:31** *The horse is made ready for the day of battle, but the victory belongs to the Lord.*

2. Do not be discouraged when you feel too weak to do God's work

**2 Corinthians 12:10** *For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

3. Step out in faith in the Lord to see His victory in your life.

**1 Cor. 15:57** *But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

**Questions for Application**

1. Do you ever find it hard to give God all the credit for His work in your life? Why do you think we are tempted to take personal credit for God's work?
2. Describe a time when you triumphed in the Lord, despite feeling too weak to win the battle over sin, or too weak to serve Him in some ministry. How did God give you the strength to overcome?
3. How can you see God's sovereign will at work in Judges 7?
4. What gives you confidence that the Lord will bring you victory in your Christian walk?
5. Pray with someone for God to increase your faith and dependence on Him, even if it means making you feel weaker and less adequate than you do now.

**Questions, Comments? - [inthebeginning@look.ca](mailto:inthebeginning@look.ca)**

If you have questions or comments about today's message, please drop me an email to the address above. Thanks,

Tim



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