

Faith Is The VICTORY

Judges 7

GIDEON

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Leap
of FAITH
Hebrews 11:1



- Vance Havner gave a message speaking from Hebrews 11, he told us that because Moses was a man of faith, he was able to “see the invisible, choose the imperishable, and do the impossible.”
- Christians are either overcome because of their unbelief or overcomers because of their faith. And remember, faith doesn't depend on how we feel, what we see, or what may happen.

- The Quaker poet John Greenleaf Whittier put it this way in “My Soul and I”:

Nothing before, nothing behind;
The steps of faith
Fall on the seeming void, and find
The rock beneath.

That rock is the *Word of God*.



- The familiar and exciting account of Gideon's wonderful victory over the Midianites is really a story of faith in action, and it reveals to us three important principles about faith. If we're to be overcomers, and not be overcome, we need to understand and apply these principles.

1. God Tests Our Faith

Judges 7:1–8



Leap of FAITH
Hebrews 11:1



Judges 7:1–8 (NKJV)

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.

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.

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.

- A faith that can't be tested can't be trusted. Too often, what people think is faith is really only a “warm fuzzy feeling” about faith or perhaps just “faith in faith.”
- God tests our faith for at least two reasons: first, to show us whether our faith is real or counterfeit, and second, to strengthen our faith for the tasks He's set before us.

The First Sifting

Vv. 1–3

- God tested Gideon's faith by sifting his army of 32,000 volunteers until only 300 men were left. If Gideon's faith had been in the size of his army, then his faith would have been very weak by the time God was through with them! Less than 1 percent of the original 32,000 ended up following Gideon to the battlefield.

- God told Gideon why He was decreasing the size of the army: He didn't want the soldiers to boast that they had won the victory over the Midianites.
- Victories won because of faith bring glory to God because nobody can explain how they happened.

- People who live by faith know their own weakness more and more as they depend on God's strength.

2 Corinthians 12:10 (NKJV)

Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

- In telling the fearful soldiers to return home, Gideon was simply obeying the law Moses originally gave: “What man is there who is fearful and fainthearted?”

Deuteronomy 20:8 (NKJV)

“The officers shall speak further to the people, and say, ‘What man is there who is fearful and fainthearted? Let him go and return to his house, lest the heart of his brethren faint like his heart.’”

- G. Campbell Morgan. “The trouble today is that the fearful and trembling man insists upon remaining in the army. A decrease that sifts the ranks of the Church of men who fear and tremble is a great, a gracious and a glorious gain.”
- Pride after the battle robs God of glory, and fear during the battle robs God’s soldiers of courage and power.

- Fear has a way of spreading, and one timid soldier can do more damage than a whole company of enemy soldiers.
- Fear and faith can't live together very long in the same heart. Either fear will conquer faith and we'll quit, or faith will conquer fear and we'll triumph.
- John Wesley may have been thinking of Gideon's army when he said, "Give me a hundred men who fear nothing but sin and love nothing but God, and I will shake the gates of hell!"

The Second Sifting

Vv. 4-8

- God put Gideon's surviving 10,000 men through a second test by asking them all to take a drink down at the river. *We never know when God is testing us in some ordinary experience of life.*
- God chose this method of sifting the army because it was simple, unassuming (no soldier knew he was being tested), and easy to apply.

The Second Sifting

Vv. 4-8

- Since the men undoubtedly came to the water by groups, Gideon was able to watch them and identify the 300. It wasn't until after the event that the men discovered they had been tested.

It Does Not Take Many With God!

- “There is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few” (*1 Sam. 14:6*).
- Moses assured the Jews that if they would obey the Lord, one soldier could chase a thousand and two would “put ten thousand to flight” (*Deut. 32:30*).
- All Gideon needed was 27 soldiers to defeat the whole Midianite army of 135,000 men (*Jdg. 8:10*), but God gave him 300.



- God graciously gave Gideon one more promise of victory: “By the 300 men that lapped will I save you” (v. 7). By claiming this promise and obeying the Lord’s directions, Gideon defeated the enemy and brought peace to the land for forty years (8:28).
- The soldiers who departed left some of their equipment with the 300 men thus each man could have a torch, a trumpet, and a jar—strange weapons indeed for fighting a war.

2. God Encourages Our Faith

Judges 7:9-15a



Leap of FAITH
Hebrews 11:1



- The Lord wanted Gideon and his 300 men to attack the camp of Midian that night, but first He had to deal with the fear that still persisted in Gideon's heart.
- God had already told Gideon three times that He would give Israel victory (6:14, 16; 7:7), and He had reassured him by giving him three special signs: fire from the rock (6:19–21), the wet fleece (6:36–38), and the dry fleece (6:39–40). After all this divine help, Gideon should have been strong in his faith, but such was not the case.

- How grateful we should be that God understands us and doesn't condemn us because we have doubts and fears!
- He keeps giving us wisdom and doesn't scold us when we keep asking (*James 1:5*).

James 1:5 (NKJV)

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

- Our great High Priest in heaven sympathizes with our weaknesses (*Heb. 4:14–16*) and keeps giving us more grace (*James 4:6*).

Hebrews 4:14–16 (NKJV)

14 Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

James 4:6 (NKJV)

But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: “God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.”

- God remembers that we're only dust (*Ps. 103:14*) and *flesh* (*78:39*).

Psalm 103:14 (NKJV)

For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust.

Psalm 78:39 (NKJV)

For He remembered that they were but flesh, A breath that passes away and does not come again.

God Encouraged Gideon's Faith In Two Ways

- *God gave Gideon another promise (v. 9).* The Lord told Gideon for the fourth time that He had delivered the Midianite host into his hand.
Note: the tense of the verb, and see Josh 6:2.

Joshua 6:2 (NKJV)

And the LORD said to Joshua: "See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, and the mighty men of valor.

God Encouraged Gideon's Faith In Two Ways

- Although the battle must be fought, Israel had already won! The 300 men could attack the enemy host confident that Israel was the victor.

- Some people have the idea that confident, courageous faith is a kind of religious arrogance, but just the opposite is true.
- Christians who believe God's promises and see Him do great things are humbled to know that the God of the universe cares about them and is on their side.
- They claim no merit in their faith or honor from their victories.
- All the glory goes to the Lord because He did it all!

- It's the unbelieving child of God who grieves the Lord and makes Him a liar (*1 John 5:10*).

1 John 5:10 (NKJV)

He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son.

- Hope and love are important Christian virtues, but the Holy Spirit devoted an entire chapter in the New Testament—Hebrews 11—to the victories of *faith* won by ordinary people who dared to believe God and act upon His promises.
- It may be a cliché to some people, but the old formula is still true: “God says it—I believe it—that settles it!”

God Gave Gideon Another Sign

Vv. 10-14

- It took courage for Gideon and his servant to move into enemy territory and get close enough to the Midianite camp to overhear the conversation of two soldiers.
- God had given one of the soldiers a dream, and that dream told Gideon that God would deliver the Midianites into his hand. The Lord had already told Gideon this fact, but now Gideon heard it from the lips of the enemy!



- It's significant that Gideon paused to worship the Lord before he did anything else.
- He was so overwhelmed by the Lord's goodness and mercy that he fell on his face in submission and gratitude.
- Joshua did the same thing before taking the city of Jericho (*Josh. 5:13–15*), and it's a good practice for us to follow today. Before we can be successful warriors, we must first become sincere worshipers.

Joshua 5:13–15 (NKJV)

13 And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, “Are You for us or for our adversaries?”

14 So He said, “No, but as Commander of the army of the LORD I have now come.” And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, “What does my Lord say to His servant?”

15 Then the Commander of the LORD’s army said to Joshua, “Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy.” And Joshua did so.



3. God Honors Our Faith

Judges 7:15b-25



Leap of FAITH
Hebrews 11:1



- “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (*Heb. 11:6, NKJV*).
- Faith means more than simply trusting God; it also means *seeking* God and wanting to *please* Him.
- We don't trust God just to get Him to do things for us. We trust Him because it brings joy to His heart when His children rely on Him, seek Him, and please Him.

God Gave Him Wisdom To Prepare The Army.

Vv. 15b-18

- Gideon was a new man when he and his servant returned to the Israelite camp. His fears and doubts were gone as he mobilized his small army and infused courage into their hearts by what he said and did.
- “The Lord has delivered the camp of Midian into your hand,” he announced to the men (*v. 15, NKJV*).

God Gave Him Wisdom To Prepare The Army.

Vv. 15b-18

- As Vance Havner said, faith sees the invisible (*victory in a battle not yet fought*) and does the impossible (*wins the battle with few men and peculiar weapons*).

- Gideon's plan was simple but effective. He gave each of his men a trumpet to blow, a jar to break, and a torch to burn. They would encircle the enemy camp, the torches inside the jars and their trumpets in their hands.
- The trumpets were rams' horns (*the shofar*) such as Joshua used at Jericho, and perhaps this connection with that great victory helped encourage Gideon and his men as they faced the battle.
- At Gideon's signal, the men would blow the trumpets, break the pitchers, reveal the lights, and then shout, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!" God would do the rest.

God Gave Him Courage To Lead The Army.

Vv. 19-22

- Gideon led his small army from the Spring of Harod (“trembling”) to the Valley of Jezreel, where they all took their places around the camp. At Gideon’s signal, they all blew their rams’ horns, broke the jars, and shouted, “The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!”
- Finding themselves surrounded by sudden light and loud noises, the Midianites assumed that they were being attacked by a large army, and the result was panic.

God Gave Him Courage To Lead The Army.

Vv. 19-22

- The Lord intervened and put a spirit of confusion in the camp, and the Midianites began to kill each other. Then they realized that the safest thing to do was flee. Thus they took off on the caravan route to the southeast with the Israelite army pursuing.

God Gave Him Opportunity To Enlarge The Army.

Vv. 23-25

- The story of Gideon began with a man hiding in a winepress (*6:11*), but it ended with the enemy prince being slain at a winepress.
- Gideon's great victory over the Midianites became a landmark event in the history of Israel (*Ps. 83:11; Isa. 9:4; 10:26*).

Isaiah 9:4 (NKJV)

For You have broken the yoke of his burden
And the staff of his shoulder, The rod of his
oppressor, As in the day of Midian.

Isaiah 10:26 (NKJV)

And the LORD of hosts will stir up a scourge
for him like the slaughter of Midian at the
rock of Oreb; as His rod was on the sea, so
will He lift it up in the manner of Egypt.

Faith Is The Victory

