

## Judges, Sermon #25

### Judges 7

In our study of Gideon, we have come to the doorstep of what God needed for Gideon to do as a judge/as a deliverer—he was to cast off the Midianites.

Remember, Gideon was a farmer, not an army officer

1. Angel comes to Gideon – “Thou mighty man of valor”
2. Gideon destroys the altars of Baal – at night
3. Gideon asks for the fleeces to be wet, then dry.

God is at work in Gideon’s life.

Gideon is not perfect.

Why does God use this man? Because Gideon is taking steps—he is progressing.

The reason God is not working in many people’s lives is because we are not working with Him!—Word of God, Spirit of God are deemphasized and set aside in our lives.

We go through the motions of life and we know there is no vitality and no enjoyment in our spiritual walk.

I’ve entitled tonight’s message “God Tests Our Faith”

### Judges 7:1

Let us stand for the reading of God’s Holy Word.

### Judges 7:1-8

Let us pray.

You may be seated.

## God Tests Our Faith

The Israelites were located next to the Wall or Spring of Harod, which was next to Mount Gilboa

Now, the horde of Midianites was just four miles north—Moreh—135,000 Midianites

**Go to map**

**Vs. 2**

The Lord tells Gideon he has too many men.

The first test of Gideon's faith was the command by God to reduce his army—the exact opposite of what we would think.

God is trying to teach Gideon the battle is not won by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of God.

Nothing will develop a nation's pride like military success.

Nothing will develop a church's pride like numbers/success.

Some churches today are mesmerized by statistics and think they're strong because they're big and wealthy, but numbers are no guarantee of God's blessing—Amos 5:21.

God told Gideon why He was reducing the size of the army: He didn't want the soldiers to boast that they had won the victory over the Midianites.

**God does things in such a way in that He, and not His servants, is glorified.**

Victories won because of faith bring glory to God because nobody can explain how they happened.

Dr. Bob Cook said, “If you can explain what’s going on in your ministry, then God didn’t do it.”

This church has been blessed—anyone who has been here for awhile knows where we’ve been and where we are now.

To the person, God has done it.

One day, I believe, God will allow us to have a Bible college on this campus.

God is dealing with the issue of pride, selfishness

Pride delights in focusing upon ourselves.

Pride says, “Look at me! I am great! Look what I have done!”

Pride says, “My own hand / intelligence / sheer will / hath saved me” and takes credit for what God has done.

II Chronicles 26:3-16

Uzziah was strong; his heart was lifted up to his destruction.

Pride opposes God and His Word—pride supplants faith.

People claim today, “I have what I have, I’ve done what I’ve done, because of my own self!”

That is the epitome (ē-PIT-o-mē) of ignorance.

Listen, everything we have, God gave to us, and He can take it away just as quick as He gave it.

So, the reason for downsizing the army is because God would not be exalted/glorified in the victory; the soldiers would be glorified.

This is a story of faith in action, and it reveals to us principles about faith.

If we’re to be overcomers, and not be overcome, we need to understand and apply these principles.

**First of all, God tests our faith (Jud. 7:1-8)**

A faith that can't be tested can't be trusted.

Many a man can make a speech; many a person can say, "I would do this or that if I were them, but when the battles come, that is where we find out what we are made of."

We can sing loudly about the "Faith of Our Fathers," but we can't exercise the faith of our fathers.

We have to exercise our own faith.

We can follow men and women of faith and share in their exploits and ministries, but we can't succeed in our own personal lives by depending on somebody else's 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.

I've noticed in my own life and ministry that God has often put us through the valley of testing before allowing us to reach the mountain peak of victory.

Spurgeon was right when he said that the promises of God shine brightest in the furnace of affliction, and it is in claiming those promises that we gain the victory.

Now, 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!

**Judges 7:3a****Vs. 3**

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.

Deuteronomy 20:8, *"And the officers shall speak further unto the people, and they shall say, 'What man is there that is fearful and fainthearted? Let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart.'"*

Faithless people/unbelieving saints—cause the others not to have faith

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!"

### **Judges 7:3b**

Two-thirds of his army ran home in fear!

Christians today are drinking at the well of fear instead of the well of faith in God.

The Bible warns us that the fear of man bringeth a snare (Prov. 29:25).

God has not given to us the spirit of fear, but power, love, and a sound mind

(II Timothy 1:7).

A faith that can't be tested cannot be trusted.

"Bring them to the water and," God says, "I will **try** them there."—vs. 4

This word **try** is a word used for refining metals by separating the dross and impurities from the pure ore.

God put Gideon's surviving 10,000 men through a second test by asking them all to take a drink down at the river.

The army needed to be reduced

- a. 32,000 – there is nothing wrong with admitting we are afraid
- b. 10,000
- c. now 300
- d. Midian had 135,000
- e. God's plan would prevent human pride

I've heard a lot of sermons on how to drink water and being alert, but this story is not about how we drink water, it is about reducing the army.

**However, we never know when God is testing us in some ordinary experience of life.**

I have had people say to me, "I know this is what God wants us to do, but I don't see how it's going to work."

I read of one leading minister who always took a drive with a prospective pastoral staff member *in the other man's car*, just to see if the car was neat and if the man drove carefully.

More than one prospective employee has ruined his or her chance for a job while having lunch with the boss, not realizing they were being evaluated.

"Make every occasion a great occasion, for you can never tell when somebody may be taking your measure for a larger place."

Gideon is being tested.

Are all the things he has learned thus far going to help him?

Is he going to believe that 300 men **plus** God is enough?

We will see next week.

Let us stand for closing invitation.

What has been testing our faith?

What is it that God wants us to do?