

Judges, Sermon #27

Judges 7

Are we there yet?

We started with Gideon way back on the first Wednesday night in September and he
has still not arrived at what God called him to do.

God is at work and Gideon is at work.

God works in us in small areas and once we have victory there, He then can use us in
larger battles.

God is preparing Gideon—this is a pattern of God's.

David was prepared; Daniel was prepared; Joshua was prepared;

Joseph was prepared.

The disciples were prepared and so was Gideon.

God grows us—if we let Him.

And Gideon is ready

I've entitled tonight's message "The Time Is Now!"

Judges 7:15

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

Judges 7:15-25

The Time Is Now!

Gideon was a new man when he and his servant returned from the host of the Midianites to the camp of Israel.

He announced to the 300 men, “The Lord has delivered the camp of Midian into your hand”—all 135,000.

Faith sees the invisible victory in a battle not yet fought.
And Gideon gave the recipe for attack in verse 16.

The army is divided into three groups.
By using this tactic, it would give the appearance to the Midianites of being surrounded.

Vs. 17

Gideon was the example for them to follow. (Look on me.)
“Watch me”—at earlier times, he could not have said that.
“Follow my lead—do exactly as I do.”

Fathers/mothers—that’s exactly what we should say to our kids—“Follow our lead.”
Sunday School teachers, ushers, preachers—“Follow me as I follow Christ.”

Gideon had come a long way since the day God had found him hiding in the winepress!

Where did God find us?

He found me in Virginia—backwards, uneducated, hillbilly-poor

Real question is—where are we now?

Has our faith grown in God?

Where is our spiritual life today compared to where God found us?

No longer does Gideon seek for a sign.

Instead, he confidently gave orders to his men, knowing that the Lord would give them the victory.

God gave him courage to lead the army

Faith requires action.

Just saying “I believe” sometimes is not far enough.

We have to physically take the leap.

At Gideon’s signal, they made their way into position.

They were to hold these positions, grasping the pitchers in their left hands and blowing the trumpets held in their right hands.

Vs. 19

The brilliant timing of the secret attack—it was launched during the changing of the guard.

The attack was executed at the beginning of the middle watch.

There were three watches at this time in history: 6-10 p.m., 10-2 a.m., and 2-6 a.m. Under the Romans it was changed into three-hour shifts: 6-9 p.m., 9-12 a.m., 12-3 a.m., and 3-6 a.m.

Gideon’s plan was implemented around 10 p.m.

It is the dead of night, and darkness blankets the land except maybe for some of the campfires.

This was the best time to launch the attack because the element of shock and surprise would be the greatest.

Timing is crucial—but God told him—tonight.

Faith is obeying God even when we can’t see it—figure it out.

Gideon demonstrated a small army attacking at an opportune time can accomplish more than a big army attacking at the wrong moment.

Let us not waste the opportunities we have to serve the Lord RIGHT NOW!
Live our life in such a way that in years to come we can say, "I lived for God!" instead of "I wish I had lived for God!"

God doesn't expect us to be stewards of what we DON'T have but of what we DO have.

Look at 7:20

Trumpets were sounded.

The battle cry was "the sword of the Lord and Gideon!"
He uses two names—the Lord and Gideon.

There is no telling what you and God can do!
God and I—most important relationship

Notice who is mentioned first in the cry—the Lord.
This was God's battle.

Man has a way of moving himself in front of God—and when that occurs, the blessing and help of God is gone.

Vs. 21b-22

The Midianites assumed that they were being attacked by a large army, and the result was panic.

The Lord intervened and put confusion in the camp, and the Midianites began to kill each other.

The Midianite camp lashed out in the darkness at anyone, and then they began to run for their lives.

This incident illustrates the truth of Proverbs 28:1.

Proverbs 28:1, *“The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion.”*

When we have done something wrong and the boss calls us in—paranoid

The Midianites were reaping what they had sown.

They caused unnecessary terror to others and now they were terrorized themselves.

Gideon sends out the Word for a mop-up crew.

7:23-24

It was obvious that 300 men couldn't pursue thousands of enemy soldiers, so Gideon sent out a call for more volunteers.

The Ephraimites are called to cut off the escape route.

To them was given the honor of capturing and slaying Oreb (“raven”) and Zeeb (“wolf”), the two princes of Midian – vs. 25

It was a decisive victory.

The Midianites are never heard of again harassing Israel.

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.

God uses underdogs—that's why for some odd reason, we root for the underdog.

Everything is against us, but God is for us—and greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world.

Gideon's great victory over the Midianites became a landmark event in the history of Israel, for it reminded the Jews of God's power to deliver them from their enemies.

The day of Midian was a great day that Israel would never forget.

Psalm 83:11, *"Make their nobles like Oreb, and like Zeeb. . ."*

Isaiah 9:4, *"For Thou hast 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, *"And the LORD of hosts shall stir up a scourge for him according to the slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb . . ."*

The church today can also learn from this event and be encouraged by it. God doesn't need large numbers to accomplish His purposes, nor does He need especially gifted leaders.

Gideon and his 300 men were available for God to use, and He enabled them to conquer the enemy and bring peace to the land.

When the church starts to depend on "bigness" – big buildings, big crowds, big budgets – then faith becomes misplaced, and God can't give His blessing.

When leaders depend on their education, skill, and experience rather than in God or His Word, then God abandons them and looks for a Gideon.

The Lord has the power to change any person.

This is seen in the life of Gideon.

Just think what God did with this young farmer.
His parents were pagan. Gideon's faith was weak and wavering.

But through the events just studied, God took this young farmer and transformed him
into a strong believer.
God changed the life of Gideon.

And He can change the life of any human being.
Only one element is necessary: faith.
Faith in God—not only a faith for salvation, but a faith to follow God

The time is now!

Let us stand for closing invitation.

Today, are we exercising our faith?

Are we following the Lord and His Word?

Are we putting our faith into action?

Are we to the point we can say—"Follow me as I follow Christ"?