

Hail, Mighty Warrior, Part 2 - Judges 7:1-8:3

Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading

Notes from the Sermon

We love a good underdog victory story. C'mon, who doesn't like Rocky Balboa standing toe to toe with Apollo Creed, or the USA hockey team knocking off the Soviets in *Miracle*. At first reading, the Gideon story feels like one of those stories. A small, outmanned army somehow defeats the enemy with 300 brave men. Sounds like they should make this one into a movie, right? Yet, if the message we glean from this is to discover how God uses people to win victories we might be missing the point. Actually, the point of the story is to point us to the God who always wins, yet He does not share His glory or need anyone to accomplish victory. From a human perspective, this seems to be an underdog story. Yet, from the grand Biblical perspective, the Gideon story fits in a long line of battles in which God's people did little or nothing only to find the God who fought for them victorious and discovering that they are free again and receive the bounty from the victory even though they did not deserve the blessing.

This story is crazy. As God's Word, we should read this as a true story, a historical event that took place at a specific point in time around 3300 years ago. The previous chapter recorded that the Israelites were under the oppression of the Midianites, Amalakitites, and easterners, marauders who wrecked farm fields, and treated Israel with incredible cruelty. Of course, we are also told that Israel did evil and that God handed them over to these oppressors as an act of divine discipline. So God calls a fearful man who is a nobody named Gideon, who then makes a call to Israel to send an army. They end up with 32,000 men, which sounds good until we realize that these three peoples are like locusts and they have more camels than can be counted. At this size the army is an underdog, but for God to tell His story the army is too big. An army of 32,000 fighting the cause of God will be victorious. Of course they will, God is undefeated. Yet that size army will lead the soldiers thumping their own chests and the people hailing the heroes who fought bravely and won. God's goal, though, was not just to win but to be victorious in such a way that the people would realize their helplessness without Him and give Jehovah the glory and credit. For Him, 32,000 is too many for this task. First, God sends the fearful home, and 22,000 leave. Now just a force of 10K men, but that is still too many. So then comes the weird drinking test. Gideon takes his parched men to a spring and told to watch how they drink. 9700 kneed down and stick their faces in the water, 300 make hand cups and drink out their hands. Those 300 remain, the rest are sent home. And to make the story more insane, rather than giving these 300 swords, ballistic missiles, hand grenades, or machine guns, they are given empty pots, a rams horn trumpet, and a torch. Then, in the middle of the night they surround the Midianite camp holding their trumpet in one hand, and the pitcher covered torch in the other. Then at once they do, what for these soldiers seems unthinkable. They will expose their position by blowing the trumpet and breaking the pitcher, exposing their torch and their position. They will be sitting ducks, without any weapon. Of course we read it and understand, the men of these three armies wake up in confusion, turn on each other, and run away from an army they believe is much larger. Gideon summons the men from other tribes to run the fleeing army down, two of the princes are captured and killed, and the men of these three tribes who are not captured or dead get across the Jordan River going back to Saudi Arabia where they are from. When we get to the end of the story nobody, not any soldier, and not even Gideon can take credit. God has saved them, or as He says over and over again in the story, He gave the Midianites into the hands of Gideon and His people.

This is not really an underdog story, an undefeated champion is not an underdog. It is a reminder about the character of God, the God who defeats all foes, who stands undefeated and victorious, and who gives the blessing to His people. He does not share the

glory, yet He does shower the blessings from His victory on those who believe, who are included in His people. All of these stories prepare us for the ultimate victory against our greatest enemies. The true enemy we face is not a foreign people, rather, it is inside of each of us. Our sin seems unbeatable, guilt is insurmountable, and death seems undefeated, and Satan feels all-powerful. These forces are more numerous than locusts in life and culture. God did not send 300 fearful men, He sent One, His Son, who took the field of battle alone. His weapon seemed less impressive than a pitcher, trumpet, and torch, He fought using a cross and His own death. And when Jesus bowed his head it seemed as if sin, Satan, evil, and death had won. What they didn't know is that His victory was already won, and His plan was to share the spoils of this victory with His people, those who trust Him alone. We don't add anything to this victory, and nobody can boast in their own accomplishments, yet for those who believe, we do share all of the blessings. Jesus wins! He is undefeated!

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Proverbs 8	Proverbs 9	Proverbs 10	Proverbs 11	Proverbs 12	Proverbs 13	Proverbs 14

Reading from this past week's sermon: Judges 7:1-8:3

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Judges 8:4-35

Family Worship

Song - *Holy Forever*

https://youtu.be/lkHgxCemCRk?si=j_4Gr2j0VF2oE0Mo

Gospel Project

Unit: Jesus Came to Earth

Story: Jesus was Born

Big Picture Question: Who is Jesus?

Answer: Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, who came to earth to save us.

Scripture: Matthew 1, Luke 1-2

New City Catechism

Question 9: What does God require in the First, Second, and Third Commandments?

Answer: First, that we know God as the only true God. Second, that we avoid all idolatry. Third, that we treat God's name with fear and reverence.

Verse: Deuteronomy 6:13-14

Judges 7:1-8:3

- Should we read this story as an underdog story? Why or why not?
- How would you feel if you were one of the soldiers who "passed" the two tests, and were left with 299 other dudes? How about when Gideon gave you a trumpet, torch, and pitcher for your weapons?
- Why would God choose to win this victory in this fashion? What does this tell us about God, His character, and His purposes in the world and our lives?
- How does this story and other victory stories in the Bible prepare us for and point us to Jesus and His victory?

Prayer

*Pray that we would trust the God of victory, who has defeated Satan, death, hell, and the grave.

*Pray that God would raise up more people to participate in our weekly prayer gatherings on Friday mornings at La Finca Coffee and Sunday mornings in the church office.