

Gideon's Army

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[0 : 00] Let's go to Judges 6. Judges chapter 6. Let me introduce you to Gideon. His name means overcoming.

! It says they cried unto the Lord.

They cried to the Lord for help. Now where's Gideon? Gideon was here hiding out from the enemy, the Midianites. And he's secretly threshing wheat.

Now to thresh wheat you need to be in an open place where the wind catches it. But Gideon's in a hiding hole. He's just hiding away. Hiding from the enemy. Secretly threshing the wheat.

And we pick up the story in Judges 6 verse 12. Judges 6 verse 12. And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him and said unto him, The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.

[1 : 08] And Gideon goes, Oh, this is, who's he talking to? Who, me? Who's the angel talking about? It must be meaning somebody else. Here was Gideon hiding out from the oppressors who had taken over the land.

And Gideon sees himself as the opposite of a mighty warrior. Just wanted to hide and thresh the wheat in a secret place. And Gideon's full of questions here.

He protests through the account, If, why, where, but, how. He asks, if the Lord is with us, why has all this happened to us? Judges 6 verse 13.

And Gideon said unto him, Oh, my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? And where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of?

Saying, Did not the Lord bring us out of Egypt? But now the Lord hath forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites. Gideon isn't exactly a man of faith and power right here, is he?

[2 : 09] He's defeated, he's discouraged, he's doubting. God's forsaken us, he's saying. Actually, it's the other way around. Isn't it? Israel had forsaken God.

They'd gone to idols, they'd followed false gods, they'd forsaken the Lord. It wasn't that God had forsaken Israel, Israel had forsaken the Lord. And that's why the situation was as it was.

Verse 14. And the Lord looked upon him and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites.

Have not I sent thee? Gideon just can't see how this can be. He doesn't feel mighty and strong. He can only see reasons why he's not able.

God says, Go. Go in this thy might. And the big thing that makes all the difference is, I have sent thee.

[3 : 12] Judges 6.15. Gideon said unto him, O my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? Behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.

Gideon here is from a humble clan. He's the least in his family. He's the least likely to succeed. He was just a nobody. Nobody. Maybe you feel that way.

Mr. Nobody. Mrs. Nobody. You may feel insignificant. Unable. You can think of all the reasons why you are not able. The fact is, the Lord can use the least of us to do his will.

That means you. It means me. It means everyone. The least likely. The Lord picks the least likely. The most unlikely to be the champion.

His champion. He chose Gideon. God says, I have sent thee. God sees Gideon differently from how Gideon sees himself.

[4 : 19] Notice that. God looks at all of us like that, doesn't he? We might see all the reasons why not, but God sees potential. He sees the divine potential in our human potential.

Even in our frail, weak, human body. He sees what he can do with you. What God can do in you, through you. And he can turn your life around.

As when Jesus saw Peter, he says, you are, you shall be. He says, he sees what you are now, he sees what you shall be.

The rock. Peter. He sees what we can be. Amen? What he can enable us to be. Judges 6.16 And the Lord said unto him, Surely I will be with thee.

And thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man. God sees the best in every man. He says, I will be with thee. Don't let yourself doubt stop you from becoming what God has made you to be.

[5 : 30] When you feel like you don't amount to much, trust him. Trust him. Trust God, especially when you're feeling weak and inadequate. He is with you.

That's what makes the difference. And there's a great comfort here. Emmanuel. God with us. I am with you, he says. I will never leave you nor forsake you.

And God assured Gideon. What happened next? God assured him of peace and to fear not. The Lord assured Gideon by a sign, a further sign. And then Gideon built an altar unto the Lord.

Notice what God says to Gideon. I have sent thee. I will be with thee. Peace be unto thee. Fear not. Verse 23.

And the Lord said unto him, Peace be unto thee. Fear not. Thou shalt not die. Verse 24. Then Gideon built an altar therefore there unto the Lord and called it Jehovah Shalom.

[6 : 35] The Lord is peace. Unto this day it is yet in Oprah of the Abias rights. Gideon found God's peace. Amen.

In the midst of the turmoil, in the midst of his uncertainty, finding peace with God is a real turning point in your life. You might say, I haven't got it yet. He can grant it you.

He can give you his peace. Reach out to him. Gideon then destroyed the altar of Baal. This was a courageous thing to do. There's some things that we need to get rid of.

Amen. The altars of Baal. Now whatever they be, I was talking with a sister lately and saying there's some things she's got to get rid of in her home.

Make her home a drug-free zone. Zero tolerance. Gideon destroyed the altar of Baal. He didn't build the altar of God next to the altar of Baal.

[7 : 36] He had to smash the altar of Baal's bits. He destroyed it. Idolatry is a bankrupt system of unbelief. It always has been. And friends, we might not see it this way, but the world we live in is full of idols.

It's an idol-worshipping nation, Australia. It's got a bankrupt belief system. And there's false gods everywhere, all around you. False gods that take God's place.

You might say, I'm not an idol worshipper. What is it that's a God substitute in your life? That's an idol, isn't it? What's that God substitute in your life?

It's an idol for you. You must remove it. You must discard it. You must get rid of it. False gods that take God's place. They've got no place in your home, in your heart.

Get rid of the false gods. Remove the idols. That's what Gideon did. Whatever takes God's place as an idol, as a God substitute.

[8 : 37] We read on verse 25, we see that Gideon took the father's bullock and he threw down the altar of Baal. He cut down the grove. Verse 26, And he built an altar unto the Lord upon the top of the rock and he offered a burnt sacrifice.

Gideon made a stand for the Lord. He decided to turn from his father's false gods. And this was a huge step. Something that sometimes holds people back is, oh, my family has always done this.

We've always gone to such and such a kind of religion or whatever it be. This is what we've always done. You know, we've always voted Labour or we've always voted Liberal.

It doesn't matter what they stand for anymore. That's what we've always done. We've always done that which is traditional, that which was always done. We've always gone to this religion, to this cathedral. That's where we belong.

We're Church of England or whatever it be. We're Catholic. But they're not Christian. Gideon had to smash his father's idols.

[9 : 41] It was a huge step. It was a bold step. Sometimes we can just blindly follow the traditions of our family who may be godless. Gideon yielded his life to the Lord.

He gave a sacrifice, says. He crossed the line. This was Gideon. Gideon, the man who was carrying in a corner. Now he's standing for the Lord. He demolished the altar of Baal.

He did it at night. Maybe he was still a bit cautious, uncertain, but at least he smashed the altar of Baal. And then we see next up a new invasion threatens.

And now this unlikely Gideon rises up as the nation's leader. Verse 34. But the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon and he blew a trumpet.

And Abiassa was gathered unto him. He blew the trumpet, the shofar. And the sound went out across the nation and it summoned the troops to battle. It's saying here that the Spirit of the Lord comes upon Gideon to take action.

[10:43] It's got the literal sense that the Spirit of God clothed him. He was clothed with the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God so clothed, so dwells with Gideon that it's like he's clothed with the Spirit of God.

Now God's Spirit has not stopped working. Amen? More than ever we also need to be empowered by His Spirit. More than ever we need the Spirit of God to give the option, the empowerment, the clothing of power from above.

We can know God powerfully today. Like Gideon. So Gideon blows the shofar, he summons the troops to battle, the call goes out and it calls out today for us.

The call goes out. That shofar is going off, the alarm, the trumpet call, the sound of the trumpet, the sound of the alarm, the rally and cry, it goes out still to all who will hear because there is a battle on in Australia.

We're at war. There's a battle raging for the souls of men and under the power of the Spirit of God, Gideon calls an army together. Yet the task is enormous and Gideon's overwhelmed.

[12:00] He asks for divine assurance. Sure, he needs to know is it God's will that he is pursuing? So he sets a sign from the Lord to confirm.

And something unusual, you know the story likely, how the first request was, a fleece that he spreads out overnight should be wet and the ground around it dry.

And it was granted. Then he asks a more convincing sign, the opposite, the direct opposite of that, that the fleece should remain dry, the sheep's wool, the fleece, would remain dry but the ground around it would be wet and God granted this sign.

So Gideon knew surely that God was surely directing him. Of course, now we know we don't need such methods. We have the Word of God. The Word of God, this is our guidance.

This is our fleece. This is our direction from God. We don't need some sign as much as God may grant that. We're not to dwell on that or seek that necessarily.

[13:03] We've got the Word of God, the more sure word of prophecy. To guide us, to direct. And so Gideon then gathered as much as an army as he could. And Judges 7 now, it says the people were with him.

They rose up, they pitched beside the well and they're on the hill overlooking the valley. And then we see the enemy troops gathering around ready to attack.

And the next thing that happened was really quite unusual, something more unusual now. Verse 2, here's Gideon, he sounded the trumpet, the people of rally, there's many gathered.

And the Lord said unto Gideon verse 2 of 7, the people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, my own hand has saved me.

He's saying, there's too many of you, Israel's just going to kind of take credit here, saying that we've saved, we've done it ourselves. Here we see gathered with Gideon is an army of 32,000, as many as he could find.

[14:13] But then the real commander of the army is saying to Gideon, he needs to reduce the size of the army. Verse 3, now they will go to proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from Mount Gilead.

And they returned to the people 22,000 and they remained 10,000. When the enemy threatens, many are afraid to fight.

It's the same today, isn't it? Many are afraid to fight. Some today, but it's the same today. And we have to trust in God to fight our battles.

Now the good thing now, as much as the army of 32,000 down to 10,000, this was now a fearless army. That's what we should be, isn't it? The church of God, shouldn't we?

An army of God without fear. The fearful had left. Gideon had now 10,000 brave men with him. This army, this 32,000, was reduced down by two thirds, but 10,000 men were still too many.

[15:24] Too many for God's plan. Verse 4, And the Lord said unto Gideon, the people are yet too many. Bring them down to the water, and I'll try them for thee there. And it shall be that of whom I say unto thee, this shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee.

And of hence whoever I say unto thee, this shall not go with thee, the same shall not go. God instructs Gideon to march the rest of the army down to the water where God will try them. It's got a sense of a refining, a testing. As gold and God is refining the army here, sifting it, he's condensing it, refining it still more.

Verse 5, Gideon brought the people down to the water, and the Lord said unto Gideon, everyone that lapped the water with his tongue as a dog lapped, him shalt thou set by himself.

Likewise everyone that bowed down upon his knees to drink. He separated the two, the ones who lapped, those who had brought the water to their mouth and just were still looking around, and those who bowed down into the water, they prostrated themselves and just drank straight from the water.

[16:37] And so the number of those who lapped and put their hands to their mouth, it says verse 6, were 300 men, but all the rest who bowed down their knees to the water were the others.

So those who knelt down at the water's edge to drink the cool, refreshing water direct, they were the rejects. Now, some have conjectured and there's commentary on these things as to what it might signify.

It's just conjecture really, but maybe the ones who had prostrated themselves and drunk straight from the water, they were bowing down as was customary to bow down to Baal.

They would prostrate themselves, they would fall on their faces before Baal and perhaps they were following the customs, they'd been used to worshipping the false idol.

And it's only a few who lapped up the water from their cupped hands. They drank while keeping guard, they were vigilant. There's a sense where maybe that's a good character trait as well.

[17:45] Not only were they fearless but they were vigilant, they were keeping their eyes open and they were still on guard. But whatever the case, these were the few that were selected by the Lord to remain with Gideon and the rest were told to leave.

So think of this now, the Lord had scaled down this mighty army 32,000 to 10,000 and shrunk it down to 300. Not only were they the fearless, they were the chosen.

They were called out and they were vigilant. Now we know the word tells you and me today, be sober, be vigilant.

Be sober, be vigilant. Because your adversary, the devil, roams around like a roaring lion. Not only were they to be fearless, they were called, they were chosen, they were vigilant.

And we need to be sober, be vigilant. So the army now, 32,000, reduced 99%, just 1%. I wonder what that might signify.

[18:46] Maybe there's only 1%. That are really ready. Let's be in the 1%. Let's be in the 300.

Amen. Verse 8, it says they took their victuals, their supplies, in their hand, their trumpets, they sent the rest of Israel, every man to his tent.

They retained those 300 men. And the host of Midian, the Midianites were beneath them in the valley. How on earth could Israel defeat this massive army? How big was Midian?

It was I think 135,000. 135,000. Some record, maybe more. What hope realistically had they of winning such a contest?

Humanly speaking, it was harder now. Their army was much weaker than it had been. Now sometimes people put all the emphasis on numbers. The bigger the church, the better.

It's kind of funny, isn't it? That Gideon was told, no, we don't want two men. Whittle it down, sift it down, refine it down to the 300.

[19:54] Now Gideon certainly didn't have a mega church, but he surely had a mega God. That's what we need, don't we? A mega God, a mighty God. And it's as if, you know, a small church under God, a small group of believers can be more powerful, can't we?

And I saw a church interstate where the pastor said it's evangelism time and the whole church was there. Mind it, it was only about 10 people I think in that church, but the whole 10 people turned up. What a blessing that is, isn't it? When it's a small church, but they're sold out, sold out. And this 300 small group did mighty things.

A small group of believers can do mighty things in God, can't we? Amen. Because we're stronger in the Lord, that's what counts. We can believe God for mighty things.

We may seem weak and small and not much to speak of and individually so, we might feel, who am I? I'm a nobody. I'm just like Gideon. We might feel I'm a weak Christian.

[21 : 08] There's so many things that I lack. There's so many faults I have. Some people have been very honest with me lately. They told me of their failings. They've done some sinful things.

They weren't pretending. I've got it all together. Sometimes we've just got to be humble, don't we? Say, pray for me, I've got a need. I've sinned.

I've not got a little closet here where you come and whisper through a curtain all your dark and dastardly things. But there's a sense where we should humble ourselves, isn't there?

And don't try to big note ourselves. Pretend we've got it all together when really, I need the Lord. I need prayer. Let's get real.

And they weren't pretending. These people, they told me of their failings. And it hurts when I hear a Satan's fallen. But when we are weak and humble, God can move in, can't they?

[22 : 07] God can move in. God can make us strong. When we humble ourselves, He can help us. He can help us get stronger. He can help us to overcome. And it was with God, Gideon and the 300 versus a mighty Midianite army, 135,000.

Wow. It was all over Red Rover. Gideon's little band didn't stand a chance. Humanly speaking, it was no hope. It was hopeless.

They were facing an experienced army outnumbered 450 to 1. Wow. And we can have such times when we feel overwhelmed, unable, like Gideon.

Like we don't stand a chance. Things seem hopeless for me. Preaching my Christian life is in a shambles. I'm not where I should be. I failed. God can step in when we come to the end of ourselves.

It can seem like it's hopeless, like it's impossible, but our faith can win through, small though it be. We are battling France today. There's a testing time.

[23 : 13] We're facing a Midianite army. But God assures us you have the victory. You have the victory. Romans 8 31, what should we say then to these things?

If God be for us, who can be against us? Surely we each face a time of battle, and the struggle for faith can seem impossible, the trials and tests of life can overwhelm, and it seems difficult to hold on.

The odds are stacked against us, like Gideon, what should we do? Trust him. Trust him. Trust him still. Trust him. Trust him still. Trust God every step of the way.

We see with Gideon, God took Gideon from that cowering, cowardly, timid, frightened man, step by step by step, forward in faith.

And he does that with you and me, doesn't he? In Gideon's day, Israel had no standing army. There was no army fully trained, ready for fight. These people at Gideon called, they were just ordinary people.

[24 : 20] No wonder Gideon was afraid to attack. But the Lord would give him victory. He saw victory even though the odds were stacked against him.

What can we learn here? Think of this impossible situation. 300 versus 135,000. This was preposterous, ridiculous, crazy.

easy. But it was God. We'd take a miracle, wouldn't it? We'd have to take a miracle, wouldn't it? The intervention of God, wouldn't it? And it still does today, doesn't it?

We had to rely on God for divine intervention. salvation. You see, there's a trendy little wristband that used to be popular. You've got the WWJD, what would Jesus do?

And there's another one, FROG, fully rely on God. We need to fully rely on God, don't we? What is it that we rely on in our lives?

[25 : 23] If Gideon was relying on the numbers, wow, what are you doing, Lord? You've just reduced my army down 99% to just 1% of what it was. Even what it was wasn't enough, humanly speaking.

And we can face obstacles in our life and feel like we just can't make it, but we can't hold on to these promises, can't we? His word, he says, it's yea and amen.

We can rely on his promises, the exceeding great and precious promises. The size of Gideon's army wasn't the point, it was God.

That's what mattered. That's what mattered. And we see, of course, the shock and the awe, as we see later, the trumpets blaring, the jars breaking, the shouting, the light breaking out.

These were just instruments in God's hand. The victory is from the Lord, it's from Him, by God's power, not our own power. When God called Gideon, he was full of fear and uncertainty, wasn't he?

[26 : 27] Hiding, trying to keep a low profile. God saw Gideon, a mighty, valiant man, a man of war, a warrior, despite all his weaknesses.

Because in Gideon, God found a man who trusted him enough to obey and to follow him, even when it seemed impossible.

It didn't make sense. Verse 9 of Judges 7, And it came to pass the same night that the Lord said unto him, Arise, get thee down unto the host. It says, get down there to the host, the army, for I've delivered it into thy hand.

But if thou fear to go down, go with furrow thy servant down to the host. So now the Lord engineers another encouraging sign for Gideon, something that will give him greater confidence and strengthen his faith.

God is strengthening Gideon step by step. He's growing Gideon step by step. God sees Gideon's fear to go down and attack and he wants to give him another encouraging sign.

[27 : 31] So you see Gideon sneaks down to the outskirts of the enemy's camp. And there's a further surprise there. Verse 11, Judges 7, 11, And you shall hear what they say, after shall one hands be strengthened to go down unto the host.

So he went down with furrow his servant to the outside of the encampment, verse 12, And the Midianites and Amalekites and all the children of the east lay along the valley like grasshoppers for multitude.

And their camels were without number as the sand by the seaside for multitude. Gideon creeps up on the enemy's camp. And here was the enemy, well before him, like locusts, as thick as locusts. And it seemed like Gideon faced impossible odds. They were well and truly outnumbered. And he overhears, verse 13 through 15, the enemy talking in their tent.

And a Midianite guard tells about a dream. He saw a loaf, this round loaf, racing down a hill like a wheel and smashing into a tent and collapsing this tent many times its size.

[28 : 38] And the other Midianite soldier interprets the dream out loud and Gideon hears this that it would be the sword of the Lord defeating the entire Midianite camp.

Here's what the enemy's mouth, what came out of the enemy's own mouth, verse 14. And his fellow answered and said, this is nothing else save the sword of Gideon, the son of Jehoash, a man of Israel, for into his hand hath God delivered Midian and all the hosts.

What an encouragement, a further encouragement from God that Gideon would hear even the enemy say that God has given the Midianites into his hands.

And what did Gideon do? Verse 15, it prompted him to worship. Let's not neglect to worship, amen? Let's not neglect to glorify God, to thank him.

Well, Lord, another sign, another confirmation, another encouragement that's uplifting from God here. Verse 15, he worshipped in our journey.

[29 : 44] People of God, the Lord sends us encouragement. The Bible calls this the comfort of the scriptures. In other words, the encouragement of the scriptures. There's a comfort of the scriptures.

This word is comforting. There's encouragement here. There's the comfort of the scriptures. It gives us hope and uplift. There's the comfort, the encouragement of fellowship. Don't miss that. There's an encouragement there.

And you can be encouraged and encouraged. It's two-way. Sometimes it's more blessed to give than to receive, isn't it? You get a buzz out of encouraging a brother, a sister.

You get a buzz out of encouraging because you're giving from your heart. It blesses your soul to bless another. There's an encouragement there, a mutual encouragement. And this word assures us constantly of his peace, of his presence and it prompts us to worship, to praise.

We'll move on. We've got a constant assurance of the scriptures. 300 men now. Let's get down to it now. 300 men. They would have to rely on God.

[30 : 50] I guess 135,000. They had to rely on God to supply, to provide, to provide a miracle, to overcome. Now God's got an even odder plan in place.

They're not really invading or attacking or carrying any weapons. They're going, it says, and carrying some odd things. And they're going to make as much noise as possible with blaring trumpets and smashing jars.

Verse 16, Gideon divided the people into three companies. He put trumpets in every man's hand, empty pitchers, jars, and lamps within the pitchers. God and Gideon had a secret plan.

They would be surrounding the Midian camp on three sides with only one way for escape. Verse 17, he issues the battle orders. He says, look on me and do likewise.

Behold, when I come to the outside of the camp, it shall be that as I do, so shall you do. When I blow with the trumpet, I and all that are with me, then blow ye the trumpets, also on every side of all the camp, and say, the sight of the Lord, and of Gideon.

[32 : 00] So Gideon and the hundred men that were with him came up to the outside of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch. This is about ten o'clock at night. And they had but nearly set the watch, so they just had a changing of the guard.

And they blew the trumpets and break the pictures that were in their hands. These jars, earthen pictures, they broke these vessels, and then there was these torches, these lamps, these torches that they would shine and hold in their left hands.

And in their right hands they would blow with the trumpet. Verse 20, and they cried, the sword of the Lord, and of Gideon.

What a sight it was at ten o'clock at night. Maybe people were just nicely having a nice little snooze. I mean, three hundred trumpets, blasted, three hundred hands smashed these earthen jars, three hundred burning torches suddenly pierced the darkness, and three hundred soldiers cried out, the sword of the Lord and of Gideon.

And there was chaos. And the Midianites started killing each other. And verse 21, they cried and fled. And we see, in fact, they fled right into where the other soldiers, the other Israelite soldiers had gone.

[33 : 19] They basically fled into destruction. So 120,000 Midianites had killed each other and the other 15,000 fled. Friends, the weapons of our warfare are not common.

These men, these soldiers of Gideon, it doesn't say that they had any arms, they didn't have a sword that we see recorded here.

earthen jars and a trumpet. The weapons of our warfare are not common, but they are mighty through God.

David had no sword in his hand when he fought Goliath. Of course, he obtained Goliath's sword, but he just had a slingshot with stones.

Friends, life can be a battle. brothers and sisters here today, our trust is in the Lord to fight our battles. You might say, preacher, you don't know how hard it is for me right now.

[34 : 20] The fight that I'm right in the thick of, God knows what you're going through. We can be easily tempted to take credit when things are going well, can't we?

The Lord didn't want that. He wanted these 300 to see it wasn't there. It wasn't Gideon, it was God. It's human nature when things are going well in our lives that we can take the credit, can't we?

Oh, life's pretty good for me, look at what I have done. And then when things go hard, we blame God, don't we? That's the human nature, isn't it, in us?

Oh, God, you've forsaken us. And cried out unto the Lord. It's kind of the last resort. God could not allow Israel to take the credit for the victory.

And it's the same with you and me, we can't depend on ourselves, we have to rely upon the true God, give Him the glory. So God got the glory, God gets the glory, God is in control.

[35 : 31] When life is hard, trust Him still, rely on Him, rest in Him. God got the glory in Gideon's situation.

Not Israel, not Gideon, it was the work of God. And it's the same with salvation, isn't it? It's His work, His finished work, He's done everything He has to do to save you, to redeem you, to set you free. What can we learn from Gideon's story? It's a privilege to be used to God. God, why Gideon? He was highly, weak.

He needed constant reassurance. But God worked with that little bit of faith that Gideon had. And He takes us to from faith to faith to faith to faith.

He can help your faith grow. He took Gideon from step after step after step to ultimately victory. And God can work through anyone, even those of the littlest faith, the most timid of little faith.

[36 : 39] And you might say, I don't feel like Gideon. Or maybe I feel like Gideon back then. God can make you like Gideon then, afterwards, as we rely on Him, trust Him.

And Gideon had this small army. They had to rely on God to bring the victory. And it's the same with you and me, isn't it? You might say, look, I'm struggling to get victory.

I'm constantly tripping up and messing up and fouling up. I feel like I don't have victory in my life. Step by step with the Savior.

Find guidance from God. We don't need a fleece, but we need this book. Amen? We need God's guidance. We need the Spirit of God like Gideon had to empower Him, to fill Him, to overflow Him. the presence of the Holy Spirit. And Gideon lived up to His name. He was an overcomer. He was an overcomer back then, at the beginning, in the hiding place.

[37 : 42] But God revealed the overcoming was God's doing. Be sure to give God the glory. And when good things happen, give God the glory.

Thank Him for what He's doing. And God can strengthen you, even when you're feeling weak and inadequate. Ask God for the strength, to strengthen your faith.

God is ready to help you grow in your faith. You know, it's one step after time. With Gideon, it was one step after time, wasn't it? He worked with Gideon step by step.

Had to keep reassuring him. Different signs and confirmations. And God was very patient with Gideon. And He's patient with you and me, isn't He? He takes us from where we are and He works with us.

He guides us. He's the potter, moulding the clay. He's delighting to work with those who humanly are weak. Those who He can save and fill with Himself.

[38 : 48] And God calls people to serve, who are the most unlikely. people filled with human doubts and fears. Gideon was a poor farmer's son.

His father was an idol worshipper. He didn't have much going for him. He was the least of the least family, the least clan. But God used Gideon and He can use you.

He wants to use you. God wants to use, even if it be just a few, just 300, a few, if they're disciplined and dedicated, committed.

God can win victories with the minority of dedicated people. And He chooses to do that. It's wonderful, isn't it?

Who does God choose? Those that seem weak in the earthly sense. And He chooses the weak and He changes us, He strengthens us.

[39 : 56] He takes us from fear to become a valiant warrior, a mighty warrior, an overcomer. And He uses ordinary things, vessels of clay, just like you and me, we're vessels of clay.

And He lets us shine His glorious light as He uses us, He takes us and uses us to accomplish His purposes.

God uses ordinary things. Praise the Lord. Amen. This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.

And Gideon, in spite of the victory, stayed humble. We see at the closing part here of Judges 8, 23, that He's routed the Midianites and the people are wanting to crown Him as King.

And Gideon says, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you. The Lord shall rule over you. Gideon stayed humble. He didn't go to his head. He knew who had wanted and warranted the credit.

[41 : 06] God. Didn't he? It wasn't Gideon. He said, don't make me the king, make him king. Let the Lord rule over you. God's will will need.

It's the same today, isn't it? On planet Earth, we can change the government back and forth, blue to red and red to blue or green.

Who cares? but it's not man's rulership that's going to save Australia it's God's rulership isn't it it's God's rulership and friends the question is for every one of us do we come under God's authority when we bow to the Saviour as Lord over our life and see where he took Gideon he says and he says this to you he will be with us that's what matters Jesus with you Jesus in you God in you Christ in you Emmanuel God with us he is with us he will strengthen us he will encourage us and assure us as he did time after time with Gideon he will encourage you open this book of encouragement and encourage yourself in the Lord he will encourage you he will assure you he will reassure you and he will send you he will enable you he will fill you with his spirit and he will fight for you and he will help you overcome because the Bible says he is our deliverer isn't that good news he's our deliverer and friends there's people in bondage in enslavement in captivity all around us they need the deliverer and we're the one who needs to go to them and tell them

Jesus can deliver you this is the victory that overcomes the world in our faith let's pray Lord God we thank you that you are the mighty conqueror Lord our mighty God the Lord of hosts victorious our

conquering King Lord we pray for each one here that they'll know you as the ruler of their heart that each one might know that saving grace that you showed at the cross where you took our sin and paid the price for our failing and sin and you took our guilt and shame and Lord we give that ultimate healing of soul to all who will call upon your name Lord we pray each one might know that grace today that we are called out as a people of God Lord we pray that we might be encouraged like as we see Gideon and all his faults that we sometimes are in his shoes baby hiding afraid fearful uncertain

Lord help us to be led by your spirit as Gideon was from faith to faith from victory to victory Lord that we can see even as a small in number as an insignificant man or woman here today that you can use each one for your glory and all the credit will be yours Lord for all the saving is yours and all the all the conquering is yours you're the one who is our deliverer and we need your strength Lord help us to be such a people in Jesus name Amen Bless the Lord let's go to our final song