

Week 5: GIDEON THE TIMID

❖ INTRODUCTION

- A Culture of Fear
- The Tension of Fear vs Faith

❖ SIGNS VS GOD'S WORD

❖ FEAR VS FAITH

❖ RESOLVING THE TENSION

Daily Readings

1

Judges 6

2

Mat 12:28-42

3

Judges 7

4

Deut 20:1-8

5

2 Tim 1:1-11

Daily Question

On what basis does God want people to trust him and not be afraid?

JUDGES 6-8

- 6:1-10 *Israel rebel against God again and this time are handed over to the Midianites for a long period of oppression. They cry out to God and he sends them a prophet, who explains their oppression as the result of their idolatry and their forgetfulness about God's great rescues of them in the past.*
- 6:11-16 The angel of the LORD came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites.¹² When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said, "The LORD is with you, mighty warrior."¹³ "But sir," Gideon replied, "if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our fathers told us about when they said, 'Did not the LORD bring us up out of Egypt?' But now the LORD has abandoned us and put us into the hand of Midian."¹⁴ The LORD turned to him and said, "Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand. Am I not sending you?"¹⁵ "But Lord," Gideon asked, "how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family."¹⁶ The LORD answered, "I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites together."
- 6:17-40 *Gideon asks for a sign that it is really the Lord speaking. The sign is given, before the angel disappears. God then directly commissions Gideon to tear down his father's altar to Baal and set up one for God instead. The Midianites invade across the Jordan river, and God's Spirit comes upon Gideon, who summons his tribe to war, but then asks for two further signs to confirm God's intention to save them.*
- 7:1-15 Early in the morning, Jerub-Baal (that is, Gideon) and all his men camped at the spring of Harod. The camp of Midian was north of them in the valley near the hill of Moreh.
- ² The LORD said to Gideon, "You have too many men for me to deliver Midian into their hands. In order that Israel may not boast against me that her own strength has saved her,³ announce now to the people, 'Anyone who trembles with fear may turn back and leave Mount Gilead.' " So twenty-two thousand men left, while ten thousand remained.
- ⁴ But the LORD said to Gideon, "There are still too many men. Take them down to the water, and I will sift them for you there. If I say, 'This one shall go with you,' he shall go; but if I say, 'This one shall not go with you,' he shall not go."⁵ So Gideon took the men down to the water. There the LORD told him, "Separate those who lap the water with their tongues like a dog from those who kneel down to drink."⁶ Three hundred men lapped with their hands to their mouths. All the rest got down on their knees to drink.
- ⁷ The LORD said to Gideon, "With the three hundred men that lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hands. Let all the other men go, each to his own place."⁸ So Gideon sent the rest of the Israelites to their tents but kept the three hundred, who took over the provisions and trumpets of the others.
- Now the camp of Midian lay below him in the valley.⁹ During that night the LORD said to Gideon, "Get up, go down against the camp, because I am going to give it into your hands."¹⁰ If you are afraid to attack, go down to the camp with your servant Purah¹¹ and listen to what they are saying. Afterward, you will be encouraged to attack the camp."
- So he and Purah his servant went down to the outposts of the camp.¹² The Midianites, the Amalekites and all the other eastern peoples had settled in the valley, thick as locusts. Their camels could no more be counted than the sand on the seashore.
- ¹³ Gideon arrived just as a man was telling a friend his dream. "I had a dream," he was saying. "A round loaf of barley bread came tumbling into the Midianite camp. It struck the tent with such force that the tent overturned and collapsed."¹⁴ His friend responded, "This can be nothing other than the sword of Gideon son of Joash, the Israelite. God has given the Midianites and the whole camp into his hands."
- ¹⁵ When Gideon heard the dream and its interpretation, he worshiped God. He returned to the camp of Israel and called out, "Get up! The LORD has given the Midianite camp into your hands."
- 7:16-8:35 *With God's help, Gideon defeats the Midianites, who start slaying each other in a panic when surrounded by Gideon's mere 300 men. Gideon calls for more Israelites to join him and chases down the remains of the Midianite army, punishing those who refuse to help him. Afterwards, the people try to make him and his sons rule over them as a dynasty of kings, but Gideon replies, "I will not rule over you – the LORD will rule over you!" Instead, he makes a religious item called an 'ephod' for them to inquire of God, but it quickly becomes an idol and ensnares Gideon and his people in idolatry. Once Gideon dies, this quickly reverts to outright worship of Baal again.*