

Judges 6-7 • Gideon and the Midianites

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Judges chapter 6. Let's pray.

Jesus, we thank You so much for Your Word. We thank You for Your goodness. We thank You for Your grace. Fill us, Lord with understanding now and teach us, we pray in Jesus' name, amen. Amen.

Judges, as you know, deals with the cycle of falling away from faith, becoming oppressed because of that falling, then praying for deliverance, and so forth. And all of it starts again. We're introduced, however, to a new character in these chapters, and a character that most of you, I'm willing to bet, are well aware of, and his name is Gideon.

Verse 1, and this is where the cycle begins. It says, *"The people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD..." (ESV)*

And this is where it always begins. But let me just say, let me just say something here. When it says the nation of Israel did evil in the eyes of the Lord, it's talking about covenant unfaithfulness. Okay.

What it means is the people of Israel began to worship the gods of the Canaanites. The people who had not been expunged from the land you'll remember, because all of them hadn't been taken out of the land. And God even said at the beginning of the Book of Judges, I'm going to leave these people here now as a test to see how willing you are to be obedient to me. And I guess God got His answer because repeatedly in the Book of Judges, the people go back and take up the pagan ways of the nations.

They live just like the people who are outside of a covenant relationship with God. Now, you guys know that we are under a different covenant with God. We're not under the same Mosaic Covenant. I say that, and it should be fairly obvious I think to most people, but believe me there are huge sectors of Christianity that live like we're still under the Mosaic Covenant.

It's absolutely incredible, and even people at Calvary Chapel will waver on this from time to time, even though we've been teaching like this for a long time. People will, come to me and they'll say, well, now what about, and then they'll bring up, inevitably they'll bring up some law from the Old Testament.

And they'll say, well, what about and I'll say, well, are you a Jew under the Mosaic Covenant? Well, no. Yeah, well, see, that's the point, you see. So, we're under a different covenant. We're under the covenant that Jesus inaugurated at the Last Supper. And He talked about this being a new agreement between God and man. Now, here in the Old Testament, Israel is still under the Mosaic Covenant, and the terms of the covenant are, obey the Law and I will bless you in the land, and none of your enemies will be able to stand up against you.

Well, obviously now they have begun to be unfaithful in that covenant, and that's what it's talking about here in verse one, and that's why it says in the end of verse 1, “...and the Lord gave them into the hand of Midian (for a period of seven years.”

Now this is what happens. This is what happens when we compromise the Word of God. By the way, this is a picture. Do you guys know that in 1 Corinthians, it talks about. Boy, I hope it's 1 Corinthians. I was just thinking off the top of my head. I hope I'm right. But it talks about how the Old Testament is given to us as an example, you know. I mean, that's why we study the Old Testament. It's an example to us. And this the book of Judges here is an example to you and I of what happens when we decide that we're going to compromise God's Word and be disobedient, and eventually we're going to find ourselves in bondage.

And that's what we see here. It says, so after Israel became disobedient, they ignored the covenant relationship with God. What happened? They went into bondage. God gave them over to the hand of Midian, and it was for a period of seven years. And then in the following verses the writer gives us the extent of their misery and bondage is also misery, right?

And so, it goes on, it says, “² And the hand of Midian overpowered Israel, (They were just, they were stronger because God had, they were so weakened by their lack of devotion to the Lord) and because of Midian the people of Israel made for themselves the dens that are in the mountains and the caves and the strongholds.”

It says, “³ For whenever the Israelites planted crops, the Midianites and the Amalekites and the people of the East would come up against them. ⁴ They

would encamp against them and devour the produce of the land, as far as Gaza, and leave no sustenance in Israel and no sheep or ox or donkey.”

I won't do it, but I could have you turn to Deuteronomy where God said through Moses, if you disobey, here's what's going to happen. The neighboring countries are going to invade the land. They're going to steal your crops. They're going to steal your herds. They're going to leave you nothing. This had been promised. Again, not one of those promises you want to put up on the refrigerator, but a promise nonetheless, that if you compromise, this will be the result. And it's exactly the way God said it would take place.

Verse 5. It says, *“For they would come up with their livestock and their tents; they would come like locusts in number—both they and their camels could not be counted—so that they laid waste the land as they came in.”*

So, what they would do is they would hold back until Israel had planted their crops, brought their crops to fruitfulness, come to the place of harvest, and then as they would begin to harvest their crops, the Midianites and the Amalekites would come into the land like a devouring locust swarm and just come in and just take it. And they could. Why? Because they were stronger. And so, they'd steal the Israelites animals, they'd steal their crops.

This is a desperate time. Can you imagine if a nation came in and occupied the United States of America and just came in and just robbed us blind. Whatever you make, just give it to us and we're taking your food and we're taking your this and we're taking that and just leaving us little. We'd be hurting, and these people were hurting big time. In fact, here's how it describes it.

Look at verse 6. This is very interesting. It says, *“And Israel was brought very low because of Midian....”*

And that's again, that's the result of the misery that we go through when we walk in disobedience and compromise. We're brought low. But now this kind of brought low is actually a good thing because this is going to precipitate them calling out to the Lord. And you guys know, don't you, that when you're praying for people that are going through a time of disobedience, and a time of rebellion, you need to be praying for him to be brought low. They need to be brought low.

People don't recognize their need until they're brought low. And we probably could all stand up right about now and talk about times we've been, God

brought us low, and we just absolutely were humbled and broken, and then what happened? We cried out to the Lord, and He began to lift us up, didn't He?

And that's why the Word says, humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord and he will lift you up. But if we exalt ourselves in the sight of the Lord, we will be brought low. So, this is just, this is kind of what happens.

They were brought low, and it tells us here in the latter part of verse 6. And as a result of that, “...*And the people of Israel cried out for help to the LORD.*”

But this time before he sends a deliverer, God is actually going to send a prophet. Look at verse 7. It says, “*When the people of Israel cried out to the LORD on account of the Midianites, ⁸ the LORD sent a prophet to the people of Israel. And he said to them, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: I led you up from Egypt and brought you out of the house of slavery. ⁹ And I delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of all who oppressed you, and drove them out before you and gave you their land. ¹⁰ And I said to you, ‘I am (YAHWEH, I am Jehovah. I am) the LORD your God; you shall not fear the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell.’ But you have not obeyed my voice.*”

Do you know what this is guys? This is called getting to the root of the issue. Because remember, where is Israel right now? They're low, right? Why are they low? Because they're miserable. Now, what are they doing because they're low? They're calling out to God. What are they saying to God? Help us. And that's a natural thing that we do when we're in trouble. Oh God, help me. Help me, help me, help me. But God sends a prophet to remind them that their biggest problem is not the misery that they currently find themselves in. That's not their biggest problem.

The biggest problem is the cause of their misery, which is disobedience. You see. That's what he's saying. That's what the prophet is saying to them. He says, you guys are miserable. Yes, God, we're miserable. Here's well so what do you want? I want God to help us. Listen, you need to understand how you got here in the first place. Why are you miserable? Because of the Midianites. No, no, no. Don't point fingers at the Midianites. They're not your problem. You are your problem. Because you've chosen disobedience. And that is why you are in the situation that you are in.

And you know what? Just like the ancient Israelites, we today, we Christians, can easily share the same short sightedness as to our lives and what's going on in our lives. And what I'm talking about is an inability, well, it's either an

inability or an unwillingness, one of the two, to see a connection between our problems and our disobedience. Or even to look there, to see if there might be a connection there. But then even once we are willing to say, well, yeah, maybe there is a connection between obedience and my problems, then we have the still greater challenge of admitting that it might be my problems that are causing, or my disobedience that's causing my problems.

In other words, let me give you an example. It's like when I'm doing, when I'm doing marriage counseling and I'm just, I use marriage, I'm not pointing fingers at anybody in specific, but when I'm doing marriage counseling, one of the biggest things we have to do in marriage counseling is get married couples to realize that they are the problem. They keep thinking that first of all, they'll come in and we got a bad marriage. Okay. And it's just like, it's just like the Israelites coming and saying, we've got a problem. It's the Midianites. Those Midianites, they're just causing, we're miserable. And why? It's the Midianites.

If we could just get rid of the Midianites. So, what we've got to do in marriage counseling is we have to bring a married couple to the point of seeing that their own issues are causing problems within the marriage. Well, once they get to that point, once an individual begins to actually believe that, then there's a further step because often what we'll see then is when you start to break through that hard shell that doesn't want to believe it, it's like oh, so our disobedience can cause our problems, huh? So, disobedience might be the cause of some of our marital problems. My wife needs to hear this. You know what I mean?

That's the next issue is pointing the finger. You see, it's one thing to admit that my disobedience can cause my problems or I should say that disobedience in general can cause my problems. It's another thing to admit my disobedience can cause my problems or is causing my problems. And so, this sort of a short-sightedness is something that's very, very common. Very common. That's why God sends a prophet. He goes, you guys miserable? Yeah. What's the problem? It's the Midianites. No, it's not. It's you guys. It's you guys. You have violated the Covenant, and this is exactly what God promised was going to take place. Wow.

Verse 11 says, *“Now the angel of the LORD came and sat under the terebinth (Your Bible may say oak) at Ophrah, which belonged to Joash (I pronounce this, or I mean I practiced this) the Abiezrite, (Close, which is the name of a clan, okay, it was the name of his clan that he was a part of) while his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the winepress to hide it from the Midianites.”*

Do you guys know that wine presses were usually places that were down low, and they were an area that they would squeeze out the wine, the juice of the grapes and it would flow down to the bottom, and that's where they'd collect it. You'd use that for wine. But what he's doing is he's threshing wheat. You don't go down to do it in a wine press. You do it up on a hill. You do it where the wind can take hold of the chaff and blow it away. They would actually literally take a fork type thing, and after the wheat had been picked and put in a big pile, they would throw it up in the air, and the lighter chaff would blow off in the wind, and the weightier seed pods would fall down to the ground.

Well, he didn't want to be out in the open because the Midianites would see him, and they'd come and steal his grain. So, Gideon is hiding. He's threshing the wheat and it's probably like an exercise in futility because there's like no wind, probably down in a wine press, but he's doing his best, right? Because desperate times, and the whole thing. So, he's down there and he's hiding from the Midianites. And I love this, it produced proves that God, I think, has a sense of humor.

It says in verse 12, *“And the angel of the LORD (who I believe is pre-incarnate Christ) appeared to him and said to him, “The Lord is with you, O mighty man of valor.”*

It sounds funny, doesn't it because here's a guy hiding from the enemy and the Lord calls him, *“O mighty man of valor.”* And Gideon, you've got to wonder if he almost laughed.

But Gideon responds in verse 13, and he says, *“And Gideon said to him, “Please, (sir) my lord, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all his wonderful deeds that our fathers recounted to us, saying, ‘Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?’ But now the LORD has forsaken us and given us into the hand of Midian.”*

Gideon got that part correct, you'll notice. That part was correct. God had given them over into the hand of the Midianites.

“¹⁴ And the LORD turned to him and said, “Go in this might of yours and save Israel from the hand of Midian; do not I send you?” ¹⁵ And he said to him, “Please, LORD, how can I save Israel? Behold, my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.” ¹⁶ And the LORD said to him, “But I will be with you, and you shall strike the Midianites as one man.”

Now, you'll notice that this sounds similar to some other Bible characters of the past. We've got Moses, who of course said God you've got the wrong man. We've got Jeremiah, who when the call of the Lord came into his life, he said, I'm just a baby. I'm just a child. I don't know what I'm doing, and so forth.

Frankly, even Solomon, who wasn't unwilling to be king, but said to the Lord, I don't know what I'm doing. I need wisdom. But in this case, we've got a Gideon who says you're sitting here calling me mighty man of valor and go in the strength that I have, and I'm sitting here hiding from the enemy right now.

And not only that, but I'm a weakling. I'm the weakest man in my clan, we are just, we're a small clan, we're a small tribe. And then I want you to notice what the Lord says to him, and by the way, this is the key to the passage. The Lord says to him, but I will be with you. Guys, we can't scoot over that too quickly.

Do you know what makes Gideon a mighty man of valor? It's the presence of the Lord. Do you know what makes you something other than what you and I are? It's the presence of the Lord in our lives. It's the presence of God. It's not us. It's God in us. It's God through us.

God guiding us, empowering us. In the New Testament Covenant that we're under, we're given the Holy Spirit to indwell us. Which is wonderful. We're born again. We're children of God. But like in the Old Covenant, we have something in common with those. We have the Holy Spirit given to us also to empower us. They did too. In the old, under the Old Covenant, it's a wonderful thing when the Holy Spirit empowers you, enables you. I will be with you.

“And he said to him, (This is Gideon speaking now. Verse 17) “If now I have found favor in your eyes, then show me a sign that it is you who speak with me. ¹⁸ Please do not depart from here until I come to you and bring out my present and set it before you.” And he said, “I will stay till you return.”

Now, apparently the angel of the Lord, really the glory of the Lord, is not just blinding. It's like talking to a guy because Gideon is moved to ask, listen, I want you to bear with me here because I want to make sure this is really you. So, I'm going to go get something. I'm going to bring it back. And the Lord says, okay I'll stay.

“¹⁹ So Gideon went into his house and prepared a young goat and unleavened cakes from an ephah of flour. The meat he put in a basket, and the broth he put in a pot, and brought them to him under the terebinth and presented them.” So, this is almost like an offering.

“²⁰ And the angel of God said to him, “Take the meat and the unleavened cakes, and put them on this rock, and pour the broth over them.” And he did so. ²¹ Then the angel of the LORD reached out the tip of the staff that was in his hand and touched the meat and the unleavened cakes. And fire sprang up from the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened cakes. And the angel of the LORD vanished from his sight.

²² Then Gideon (realized, or he) perceived (as it says here in the ESV) that he was the angel of the LORD. (I love his response) And Gideon said, “Alas, (or woe is me if you will) O Lord GOD! For now I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face.” ²³ But the LORD said to him, “Peace be to you. Do not fear; you shall not die.”

I always find it very interesting when people in the Old Testament are given a visitation from the Lord and once He leaves they realize it's Him. And this will happen actually later on in this book again, and then they go, and they think, well, we're dead. And yet the Lord came to them and said, I've got a job for you. But you won't be able to do it because just seeing me is going to be enough.

Doesn't that sound crazy? It's like, why would God show Himself to you if the result would be, you're not going to live through the process? You've just got to work it through a little bit. And so, the Lord speaks to Gideon and says, just chill, buddy. That's what peace be to you means. He says, do not fear.

And so, it says, *“²⁴ Then Gideon built an altar there to the LORD and called it, The LORD Is Peace. To this day it still stands at Ophrah, (at least it did at the time of this writing) which belongs to the Abiezrites. ²⁵ That night the LORD said to him, “Take your father's bull, and the second bull seven years old, and pull down the altar of Baal (look at this) that your father has, (so his dad was a pagan worshiper) and cut down the Asherah (and that would be a pole or a wooden thing, was there for the worship of that God) that is beside it ²⁶ and build an altar to the LORD your God on the top of the stronghold here, with stones laid in due order. Then take the second bull and offer it as a burnt offering with the wood of the Asherah that you shall cut down.”*

²⁷ So Gideon took ten men of his servants and did as the LORD had told him. But because he was too afraid of his family and the men of the town to do it by day, he did it by night.”

And that tells you a little bit about the man, doesn't it? It tells you that he's kind of timid. He's not a real strong sort of an individual in and of himself.

Well ²⁸ *When the men of the town rose early (and it looks like Gideon was right) in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was broken down, and the Asherah beside it was cut down, and the second bull was offered on the altar that had been built.*

²⁹ *And they said to one another, "Who has done this thing?" And after they had searched and inquired, they said, "Gideon the son of Joash has done this thing."* ³⁰ *Then the men of the town said to Joash, (meaning Gideon's father) "Bring out your son, that he may die, for he has broken down the altar of Baal and cut down the Asherah beside it."* ³¹ *But Joash said to all who stood against him, "Will you contend for Baal? Or will you save him? Whoever contends for him shall be put to death by morning. If he is a god, let him contend for himself, because his altar has been broken down."*

It's pretty interesting. This was an altar that his dad actually had, and yet the men of the town are all upset because Gideon broke it down, and yet his father steps up in his defense and basically says, hey listen, if Baal is a god, he can fight his own fights. Why do you feel like you have to fight his fights for him? Which, by the way, is really sound logic. It really is. Yeah. It's a good thing to remember.

It says in verse 32 that, *"Therefore on that day Gideon was called Jerubbaal, that is to say, "Let Baal contend against him,"* Because Jerubbaal means let Baal contend. And that was because, of course, he broke down the altar. It's quite possible the name began as a negative, almost taunting sort of a thing, but later on took on a more honorable connotation.

Verse 33. *"Now all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the people of the East came together, and they crossed the Jordan and encamped in the Valley of Jezreel."* ³⁴ *But the Spirit of the LORD (look at this) clothed Gideon..."*

Isn't that a great phrase? That's how it's given in the ESV here anyway. I like that. And the Spirit of the Lord clothed him. That would be similar to, in the New Testament, the Spirit of the Lord came upon them, as it says many times in the book of Acts. The Spirit of God fell upon the Church, or the Spirit of God came upon Paul, or the Spirit of the Lord came upon Peter. Same sort of a reference.

So, the Spirit of the Lord came upon. Gideon, *"...and he sounded the trumpet, and the Abiezrites were called out to follow him."* ³⁵ *And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh, and they too were called out to follow him. And he sent messengers to Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, and they went up to meet*

them. ³⁶ Then Gideon said to God, "If you will save Israel by my hand, as you have said, ³⁷ behold, I am laying a fleece of wool on the threshing floor. If there is dew on the fleece alone, and it is dry on all the ground, then I shall know that you will save Israel by my hand, as you have said."

³⁸ And it was so. When he rose early next morning and squeezed the fleece, he wrung enough dew from the fleece to fill a bowl with water. ³⁹ Then Gideon said to God, "Let not your anger burn against me; let me speak just once more. Please let me test just once more with the fleece. Please let it be dry on the fleece only, and on all the ground let there be dew." ⁴⁰ And God did so that night; and it was dry on the fleece only, and on all the ground there was dew."

Once again, what does this tell you about the man Gideon? It tells you more about his character, doesn't it? And just his propensity to doubt and to wonder, God is this really, are you really going to do it just this way and so forth? But more than that, can you see what this chapter, there's a theme that's emerging from this chapter about God using that which is weak and turning it into that which is strong. Do you see that here?

Gideon is not a strong man in and of himself. He's a weak man, isn't he? He hides from the enemy. When God calls him, he questions it. And even after God shows him some pretty incredible things, the angel of the Lord, fire and all this stuff, he still wants more signs to just to make sure God, is this really you?

Chapter 7 goes on to say that, "*Then Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) and all the people who were with him rose early and encamped beside the spring of Harod. And the camp of Midian was north of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley.*" ² The LORD said to Gideon, "*The people with you are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hand, lest Israel boast over me, saying, 'My own hand has saved me.'*" ³ Now therefore proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, "*Whoever is fearful and trembling, let him return home and hurry away from Mount Gilead.*"' Then 22,000 (decided that the war wasn't for them) of the people returned, and (it says that) 10,000 remained."

Now that's got to be a little disheartening if you're thinking of this in terms of just military strength. And you've got all these guys who have turned out. 32,000 men. And the Lord says, nah, there's too many. Tell them that if any of them are afraid, and this was something that was actually factored into the Law whenever they went to war they were to actually put out this word and say, if anybody trembles, let him turn and go. Why? Because when you're fighting the battles of the Lord, you need to walk in faith, don't you? You do.

Do you guys remember? You guys remember when Jesus would go in sometimes to heal? Like when he healed Jairus' daughter and other situations. Do you ever remember him putting people out of the room?

You ever wonder what that was all about? He'd go in and say, everybody get out of here. And maybe he'd have just Peter, James and John in there, maybe. But He'd usually clear the place, not always. But you've got to wonder if there's just that get that unbelief out of here. And it's like, that's what God is doing here. Twenty-two thousand of these people left.

“⁴ And the LORD said to Gideon, (And this must have really just tweaked him. He says) “The people are still too many. Take them down to the water, and I will test them for you there, and anyone of whom I say to you, ‘This one shall go with you,’ shall go with you, and anyone of whom I say to you, ‘This one shall not go with you,’ shall not go (with you).”

What is God doing here? Well, it's pretty obvious, isn't it? He wants to make it clear that He alone is delivering Israel. So, He's putting the odds just astronomically against them.

And, “⁵ So he brought the people down to the water. And the LORD said to Gideon, “Everyone who laps the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall set by himself. Likewise, everyone who kneels down to drink.” ⁶ And the number of those who lapped, putting their hands to their mouths, (it says) was 300 men, but all the rest of the people knelt down to drink water. ⁷ And the LORD said to Gideon, “With the 300 men (right here) who lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hand and let all the others go every man to his own home.”

Now this is crazy. Now you might've thought at first when he showed up with 32,000 men, you might've thought, Oh, that's a pretty good size army. But the Midianites numbered around 135,000. So, they were over 100,000 more than what he had when he had 32,000 men.

Now he's got 300 and so the ratio is now about 450 to one. That's not the greatest of odds. I mean, if you're a betting person, you're probably not going to put your money on that particular bet. But those are the kinds of odds that God loves, by the way. That's probably a good point to make. Those are the odds that God just goes, yes, I'm behind that one.

“⁸ So the people took provisions in their hands, and their trumpets. And he sent all the rest of Israel every man to his tent but retained the 300 men. And the

camp of Midian was below him in the valley. ⁹ That same night the LORD said to him, “Arise, go down against the camp, for I have given it into your hand. ¹⁰ But if you are afraid to go down, go down to the camp with Purah your servant.”

Notice that God said, if you're afraid, go down. What did Gideon do? He went down. What does that tell you about what Gideon was feeling? He was afraid. So again, we learn a little bit more about Gideon.

¹¹ “And you shall hear what they say, and afterward your hands shall be strengthened to go down against the camp.” Then he went down with Purah his servant to the outposts of the armed men who were in the camp. ¹² And the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the people of the East lay along the valley like locusts in abundance, and their camels were without number, as the sand that is on the seashore in abundance. ¹³ When Gideon came, behold, a man was telling a dream to his comrade. And he said, “Behold, I dreamed a dream, and behold, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian and came to the tent and struck it so that it fell and turned it upside down, so that the tent lay flat.”

By the way, you might not know this. This is an interesting little side point that a barley loaf was considered the bread of the poor. Okay? The bread of the poor. It fits in with our theme, doesn't it? What's the theme here? God taking that which is not. Which is weak, right? And turning it into something that is.

“¹⁴ And his comrade answered, (Oh, this is nothing) “This is no other than the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel; God has given into his hand Midian and all the camp.” ¹⁵ As soon as Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, he worshiped. And he returned to the camp of Israel and said, “Arise, for the LORD has given the host of Midian into your hand.” ¹⁶ And he divided the 300 men into three companies and put trumpets into the hands of all of them and empty jars, with torches inside the jars.

¹⁷ And he said to them, “Look at me, and do likewise. When I come to the outskirts of the camp, do as I do. ¹⁸ When I blow the trumpet, I and all who are with me, then blow the trumpets also on every side of all the camp and shout, ‘For the LORD and for Gideon.’” So, he's got 300 men, but he's stationing them around this multitude of people.

“¹⁹ So Gideon and the hundred men who were with him came to the outskirts of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, when they had just set the watch. And they blew the trumpets and smashed the jars that were in their hands.

²⁰ Then the three companies blew the trumpets and broke the jars. They held in their left hands the torches, and in their right hands the trumpets to blow. And they cried out, “A sword for the LORD and for Gideon!” ²¹ Every man stood in his place around the camp, and all the army ran. (These guys literally just stood there while the Midianite army ran off.) They cried out and fled. ²² When they blew the 300 trumpets, the LORD set every man's sword against his comrade and against all the army. And the army fled as far as Beth-shittah toward Zererah as far as the border of Abel-meholah, by Tabbath.

²³ And the men of Israel were called out from Naphtali and from Asher and from all Manasseh, and they pursued after Midian.” So, all those guys who wanted to go to war got an opportunity here at the end, after the Midianites were already running for their lives. They called out the rest.

“²⁴ Gideon sent messengers throughout all the hill country of Ephraim, saying, “Come down against the Midianites and capture the waters against them, as far as Beth-barah, and also the Jordan.” So, all the men of Ephraim were called out, and they captured the waters as far as Beth-barah, and also the Jordan.

²⁵ And they captured the two princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb. They killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb, (I doubt they didn't call it the rock of Oreb until later) and Zeeb they killed at the winepress of Zeeb. Then they pursued Midian, and they brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon across the Jordan.”

Once again, the theme of these chapters that we've looked at. I want to show, I want to show you the verse that I think gives a wonderful summation of this theme. Paul's letter to the Corinthians,

2 Corinthians 12:9-10 (ESV)

But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

But (Jesus speaking to Paul said to him) he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect (Where? In your strength? That's not what it says, does it? But rather) in (your) weakness.” Therefore, (Paul says) I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Do you know that that last statement grammatically, doesn't even make sense when I am weak, then I'm strong. Only in the context of God can that make sense. If I went around telling people just without the context of God, when I'm weak, I'm strong. It's a contradiction. It's well, if you're weak, then you're weak. You can't be weak.

And that's what he's saying. He's saying that when I am weak, the power of God rests on me and then I'm strong. So, I delight in being a Gideon. I'm a weak person. I'm a weak person. That's one of the smartest things I think we can say as we're praying, talking to the Lord God. You know God, I'm a weak person.