

Judges part 5, Gideon part 2 – Judges 7. The underdog

Everyone loves a good underdog story – I sent out a message this week asking what some of you thought were the greatest upsets of all time:

Rocky v. Apollo and the Russian, George Washington's defeat of the British (outgunned/outmanned)  
Sargeant Alvin York, a WW2 vet who captured hundreds of Germans single handedly  
Miracle on Ice USA hockey, Buster Douglas beats Mike Tyson, Auburn beating Alabama in the Iron Bowl 2013  
1994 Duke beats Kentucky in Sweet 16 with last minute heave to Christian Laettner  
The Indiana basketball team that made the movie Hoosiers, NC State beating Phi Slamma Jamma  
The next time the Cowboys win the Super Bowl  
Last one I received – you marrying your wife.....thanks babe, I needed to be reminded again

This morning we are going to look at one of the greatest upsets in the Bible...

Last week we began looking at the man Gideon – we were pretty hard on Gideon – he was a fearful leader  
He struggled in his faith to trust God, he struggled to trust God's word to him

But this morning, we are going to see the other side of Gideon – by this point in his life, Gideon has been battle tested, he has been assured of victory – and he is ready for war....

The big idea of the message this morning is this.....the Lord puts us in situations to grow our reliance on him –

Now, I know what you are saying....wait a minute....you mean the reason I am struggling in life is b/c of God.....lets be clear, we struggle in life because of our original sin – from there, God uses the results of original sin to bring about good in our life....

It's a great miracle that this happens.....that God can take what could potentially ruin us, and use it for our benefit

But I want you to hold on to a thought this morning.....that every situation in your life is an opportunity for God to grow our reliance on him....

**v.2.** Lets set the scene – Gideon is about to go to war against the Midianites, he has an army of 32,000 men....its important to know here....even with 32,000 men – Israel was still the underdog

But God, realizing the way we think....tells Gideon – I don't want you to win this war with 32k men....Israel could still boast – we did it – and forsake God

So God instructs Gideon – tell all your men, whoever is fearful, trembling.....go home, its at this point that 22k men return home.....this leaves 10k men

But God wanting to prove that we CAN be fully reliant on him in EVERYTHING tells Gideon.....i want you to trim the troops down even more....go down to the water, watch how they drink water.....separate the lappers, from the kneelers....

By this time, there are only 300 men left – to take on the Midianites – one of the most powerful armies in the region

So you would think, that these men would need the best armor, the best technology of the day....but no....

Instead....look at what God equips them with in battle – **v.16-18**. Trumpets, jars, and torches inside the jars...

This is just plain irrational....that God would equip 300 with some musical instruments, pottery, and some fire...

I want you to pause real quick.....everyone in the room, put yourself in the position of these men.....no hands, but....can anyone say without hesitation – I would be confident in the Lord’s provision for this battle....

Well, if you know the story, you know the result.....these 3 measly companies surround the camp, and simultaneously blow their trumpets, smash their jars, and watch

The Midianites are in complete confusion and terror.....and look at v.22 – the Midianites begin killing themselves

Scripture makes it clear hear, that Gideon.....his army of 300 men, and the battle plan had absolutely zero chance of success against the Midianites...

AND THAT IS EXACTLY WHY GOD CHOSE EACH ONE.....

We love the story of the strong and willfull hero who succeeds against all odds....but the reality is humans we have no hope of success apart from divine grace....

2 Corinthians 12:9 – my grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness....

Lets apply this to our life.....5 points....

1. Your weakness is not in the way of what God can do in your life...its your delusions of strength<sup>1</sup>(2 Corint. 3:4-5)  
Our greatest struggles come when we think our plans are better
  - a. than God’s plan
  - b. How many times have we skirted God’s plan (what he is really wanting to do) by thinking our way is better
2. When God wants to use us, he often will weaken us (Colossians 1:11)
  - a. Sometimes this comes from our own disobedience
  - b. Sometimes this comes from God wanting to be more glorious in our life than we can imagine
3. Your hope is found in the same place where Gideons was – where was his hope found....that God was with him (Romans 8:38-39)
  - a. God said, I will be with you, It’s the experience of Emmanuel
  - b. When you are weak, confused, tired, struggling.....don’t quit.....walk in faith knowing God is with you
4. God can turn your weakness into strength. (2 corinthians 12:9-11)
  - a. How does God do this, through your availability
  - b. Gideon lacked faith from time to time, so do you and I
  - c. What made Gideon a hero was that he was always available
  - d. How can you be available for God to use? Teach, serve, ministry
5. God sends salvation not by your might, but through the humble obedience of Jesus (Ephesians 2:8)
  - a. Salvation is solely the act of a gracious God
  - b. We have offended him and only him
  - c. Because of this, he is the only one who can bring forgiveness

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<sup>1</sup> Paul David Tripp -The Battle Plan of God