

**Feb 4<sup>th</sup> 2007: Commissioning Sunday: Judges chapter 7**

**This morning our focus** ...commitment to the ministry that the Lord ....as His church  
 As a group..... as individuals  
**A commitment** that is to serving the Lord.....in His way.....in His power....to His glory

**If such a commitment is real**....then we will be opening ourselves up....  
 grand adventure Of Faith

**For God's way**.....is as different to our way....as God Himself is diff to us

- **This** is seen in a very obvious way.....in the story that we read...from Judges 7  
 About Gideon and his 300 warriors.

**It contains an unsurpassable lesson**.....about God's way of working  
 For it shows us that the way of victory  
 Is not through great numbers.....Human strategy.....or resources  
 But through a complete and utter dependence on the power and enabling of God

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- **The story is set in**....period of the judges.....A time of great turmoil and struggle for  
**There** is as yet no king.....but a tribal system supposedly united under God.....  
 disrupted by evil & rebellion.....

**In Judges 6 we read**.....that this evil &....had so taken hold...that the Lord had given  
 ....hands of the Midianites.....and 6:2—6.....

- **This cry for help**.....was always responded to by...who then raised up a deliverer  
**And in** this case.....the deliverer was not a great warrior or a mature leader  
**But a young man called Gideon**.....who wrestled with spiritual doubts  
 .....and responded to the angels commissioning...by saying.....**6:15**.....

**When God** set the task before him...Gideon looked at himself and found no reason 4  
 confidence

**The task was immense**.....It was to save Israel out of Midian's hands  
**An enemy** that that was so huge....that it was imposs to count the men and camels.....

- **But God made a promise** to Gideon That He still continues to make to every person that He calls into His service.....**Judges 6:16**.....

Now a lot happens between this promise.....major battle.....great victory  
(Leave you to read that)

**But after such a statement**

You would have to think that God would make things easy for Gideon  
That he would have plenty of support in terms of manpower  
An abundance of resources  
Heaps of encouragement

**Not so**

- **The first thing that Happens is that**  
**THE ENEMY INCREASES**

Judges 6:33 says: *Now all the Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples joined forces and crossed over the Jordan and camped in the Valley of Jezreel*

**Indeed** Judges 8:10 tells us that they totaled 135,000.....125,000 at least swordsmen  
**7:12** tells us...then when you looked at their camp.....thick on the ground....locusts

- **Gideon had just won a victory....in his own family**  
He turns from that to the task...Lord has called Him into  
And discovers that the Midianites had been joined by other fierce nomadic tribes

**All were sworn enemies of Israel**.....All were well prepared for battle  
Seasoned warriors ...with mobility and experience

**Praise the Lord however**....He is with Gideon even as He promised  
And we read in v 34 that the Spirit of the Lord Himself....came upon Gideon  
**He was given power...wisdom...enthusiasm...zeal for the task**

**He blows the trumpet**....summons the troops.....and 32,000 join Him  
Isn't God good !!

- **Many of us .....exp the same thing in ministry**  
Lord lays on our heart a task.....And though we feel inadequate we respond by faith

**Then suddenly** we realise that its going to be more demanding....harder....bigger  
**But the Lord seems to pour on us...** a special portion of His Spirit  
 Our enthusiasm grows....courage..faith.....**And others** join us

- **We may have times of doubt...as Gideon obviously did....He even sought a sign**  
 But the Lord confirms His purpose.....**Re stokes the fire as it were...**in our hearts

**Then the second thing that happened.....for Gideon**  
 Was ....**THE LORD LESSENERED GIDEON'S RESOURCES**

**He had 32,000 men and the enemy had 135,000**  
 And the Lord told him.....You have too many men

*( I detest that lotto advert....Big is better=====But that is the way the world thinks  
 And unfortunately.....its often the way the church thinks  
 We are moving into the age of the mega church....where unless you have ..)*

**Theres a verse in Zechariah 4:10 that asks.....**  
***"Who despises the day of small things?"***

**And it goes on to** show that it's the small things,,,,,,the small people.....God uses most  
**In the** very same chapter....God proclaims  
**Not by might, Nor by Power, But by My Spirit says the Lord**

- **And if ever a Bible story proved that point.....This story does**

**God said....**tell the ones who are fearful.....Who don't really want to be here  
 That they are free to go home

**What a courageous thing for Gideon to have to do**

These people were not professional soldiers  
 Up to then.....their plan when the Medianites came.....Find a cave and.....

**They could** see the enemy stretched out in the valley.....**135,000** well armed  
 And here they were being told....they could go:::No shame...no recompense  
**They left in their droves.....22,000**

**Still too many said God**.....And there by the water.....God separated them again  
300 were chosen

**From the** ten thousand that wanted to be there....**God** said these are the 300 I want....

- Was there anything wrong with the rest.....NO
- Were they any less willing or able.....I DOUBT IT.

**God made it as so impossible**.....That they had to trust in Him alone  
And would know for ever....That their God gave them the victory

**This would have been a very hard time for Gideon**.....and hard times are part of any  
**But the really** wonderful thing....is what happened next

- **GOD ENCOURAGED GIDEON**

**Gideon is well known**.....for seeking signs from God  
Before He committed himself to.....He put out his fleece.....twice(chapter 6)

**But in this moment** of greatest testing.....When God leaves him with just 300 farmers  
..to fight an enemy of 135,000

**Gideon seeks no sign**.....He just is prepared to trust

**But God in His mercy** sends Gideon with his servant.....into the enemy camp...dark of  
night.....**He comes up** against a tent.....IT JUST happens that 2 men are talking...dream

**This can be nothing other than the sword of Gideon**

**I'm sure Gideon didn't reckon....that they even knew his name**

Yet here.....they are proclaiming their fear of Him....and of His God.....

No wonder he **worshipped**                      **Went back** filled with the power of God

- **This is something God delights to do for His servants**

As you minister for Him.....Look for the encouragement He will send your way

**Then finally**  
**THE MOST AMAZING VICTORY**

**Gideon divided his 300 into 3 groups.....**

**In one hand** they held a lighted torch within a clay jar.....In the other a trumpet  
 (Now normally only a few men had trumpets.....)

**Then in the middle watch.....**enemy were sleeping.....darkest time  
**They surrounded.....**And when Gideon blew His trumpet.....

And they shouted...For the Lord and for Gideon....A sword for...

**And stood there** with a torch in one hand....A trumpet.....And no way of holding  
**And before them they saw panic.....**

- **God is still in the business of victory.....not defeat**

And he often uses the weak...the small...the insignificant

**His desire** is to have us trusting in Him and not our own strength

- **Whatever your ministry is for Him.....**And we all have

Don't expect it to be without its difficulties.....problems....challenges

**Persevere in it by faith.....**Look beyond what is lacking.....**Or what** is taken away  
**To what God is about to do....**To provide....To achieve

**FOR THE BATTLE DOES INDEED BELONG TO THE LORD**

