

Week #5 | “The God Who Fights For Us”

I. INTRODUCTION (JUDGES 7:8-25)

- A. Well, Gideon’s confidence was boosted as we closed out **Judges 6**, but suddenly, as we start **Judges 7**, in just 7 short verses, Gideon’s army is cut down from 32,000 to 300, leaving him deflated, even though God’s the one pairing it down.
- B. God was clear, “*Gideon, if I give the Midianites over to you and your army of 32,000 soldiers, you guys will think that it was your strength that brought about the victory, and you won’t remember Me. Therefore, I have to reduce your army, and you (Judges 7:2).*”
- C. This painful process sees Gideon reluctantly sending away 31,700 soldiers and keeping 300. Gideons in a place of utter destitution, complete weakness, and fear.
- D. But it’s here, when Gideon has reached the end of himself, that God steps in powerfully assuring Gideon that He has him right where He wants him.
 - 1. Could it be that God also has you right where He wants you? Could it be your reduction of strength that’s the perfect gameplay from God to bring about a great victory?
 - 2. Could it be a Saint Peter’s University final four appearance victory that God’s bringing about on your behalf? (*Run Baby Run Arena 3,500*)
 - 3. Beloved, even if you don’t feel it, God’s fighting on your behalf.

II. A COURSE CHANGING DREAM (JUDGES 7:8-15A)

- 1. **Judges 7:8-11** “So the people took provisions and their trumpets in their hands. And he sent away all the rest of Israel, every man to his tent, and retained those three hundred men. Now the camp of Midian was below him in the valley. And it happened on the same night that the Lord said to him (Gideon), Arise, go down against the camp, for I have delivered it into your hand. But if you are afraid to go down, go down to the camp with Purah your servant, 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 outpost of the armed men who were in the camp.”
- B. Well, outta sheer duty, Gideon has sent away the remaining 9,700 soldiers and is now left with 300. We get the idea that this has crippled Gideon. But, the men retained their weapons: *trumpets*.
- C. Typically, the night before a big fight, or a battle is notoriously a hard night, a sleepless night, a restless night, but for Gideon, it’s the worst night of his life.
- D. If you noticed the language in the verse it says, “...the camp was below HIM (Gideon)...” not THEM as in the army. This is often how leadership works. It’s on someone’s shoulders. The weight isn’t resting on the camp’s shoulders, it’s not on the army’s soldiers, it’s on Gideon’s shoulders (*the writer wants us to see this*).
 - 1. Greyhound: *the movie*—The Black Pit (120 hrs) in the middle of the Atlantic.

2. *“We’ve reached our limit, we can no longer go with you. We wish you luck as you travel through the PIT...our allied planes will be able to protect you when you get further across, closer to the U.K., but until then, Godspeed.”*
- E. This is where Gideon is. This is the worst night “sleep” of his life. But last time Gideon was here, he asked for a sign, but before he could even get the words out of his mouth:
1. *“...it happened on the same night that the Lord said to him (Gideon), Arise, go down against the camp, for I have delivered it into your hand. But if you are afraid to go down, go down to the camp with Purah your servant, and you shall hear what they say; and afterward your hands shall be strengthened to go down against the camp (Judges 7:8-11a).”*
- F. Gideon? Afraid? Yup, that’s him! Look, this isn’t some cr1Justy, immoveable man of steel. This is no hero. This is a scared, afraid, young leader who’s emerging. But how beautiful that God knows our frame. He knows our fears. He knows our hesitancy. And in our fragile state, He doesn’t break us, He doesn’t drive us, He doesn’t demand of us, He encourages us, He gives us another option, He relieves our fears.
1. Gideon’s afraid, and lonely, so what does God do, tells Gideon, *“I’m going to relieve your fears, and take someone with you, so you don’t feel alone!”*
- G. Well, both Gideon and the reader are left in suspense. We now know that God has a plan, and whatever He’s about to do is great, but we simply don’t know what it is.
1. **Judges 7:12** *“the Midianites and Amalekites, all the people of the East, were lying in the valley as numerous as locust; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the seashore in multitude.”*
- H. Well, this is a parenthetical verse, something that’s being used to validate Gideon’s fears, reminding us that what he’s up against is significant, large, without number and way too many for Gideon’s to take on their own.
- I. Imagine what ole Gideon’s feeling when he creeps down there. It was everything he dreaded and then some. His fears weren’t unrealistic, it was even worse than he feared (F.E.A.R). But with God’s assurance, Gideon’s creeping down to see what God might be doing.
1. **Judges 7:13-14** *“And when Gideon had come, there was a man telling a dream to his companion. He said, I have had a dream: to my surprise, a loaf of barley bread trumbled into the camp of Midian; it came to a tent and struck it so that it fell and overturned, and the tent collapsed. Then his companion answered and said, This is nothing else but the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel. Into his hand God has delivered Midian and the whole camp.”*
- J. What an amazing moment for Gideon. God has sovereignly sown a dream into the imagination of the enemy camp, for the sole purpose of assuring Gideon that He’s with him.
1. Gideon’s learning that God is leading human history perfectly, regardless of what he sees, regardless of how big the army is.
 2. This is why we also have to be strengthened through faith, this is why we also have to embrace weakness, because on the other side is the power of God, is the provision of God, is the supernatural activity of God among us, around us, and through us.

3. **Judges 7:15** “And so it was, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, that he worshipped. He returned to the camp of Israel, and said, Arise, for the Lord has delivered the camp of Midian into your hand.”

- K. This might be among the greatest moments in the Gideon story. It’s been a long, painful road to get here, but look at Gideon, about to see one the greatest defeats in the Bible, and before the fight, once trembling, unable to sleep, now on his knees! He’s worshipping!
- L. Beloved, there it is. Fear has been dissolved, timidity has been replaced with confidence, in what? His 300 soldiers? Forget it. In God! He’s worshipping because God has fulfilled His promises to Gideon and to Israel.
1. Well, it’s easy to look at Gideon’s life and think, really? You needed an angel to consume your sacrifice, two fleeces, and a dream before you were ready to attack? Like come on Giddy!
 2. But in reality, how many of us have had God show up in our lives. And when He does we say, “Lord, I will never doubt you again...until I’m back under the pressure and losing my mind.”
 3. Beloved, we have to remember that these stories have been written for our admonition. They are here to instruct us, not the other Churches, or our neighbors, but to instruct you/me!

III. ARISE (JUDGES 7:15B-25)

1. **Judges 7:15b-18** “He returned to the camp of Israel, and said, Arise, for the Lord has delivered the camp of Midian into your hand. Then he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put a trumpet into every man’s hand, with empty pitchers, and torches inside the pitchers. And he said to them, Look at me and do likewise; watch and when I come to the edge of the camp you shall do as I do: when I blow the trumpet, I and all who are with me, then you also blow the trumpets on every side of the whole camp, and say, the sword of the Lord and of Gideon.”

- B. Well, God says to Israel through Gideon, Arise! Why? Because God has ALREADY DONE IT. He’s gone before them. How? With the dream. Gods made it clear, it’s a done deal. It’s fixed!
- C. Well, Gideon’s God-given leadership abilities that were dormant, have come to life. He’s leading, organizing the 300 soldiers, laying out the battle plan and fired up to see a great victory. Gideon’s a transformed man.
- D. The order of the shout is important, “...the sword of the Lord and of Gideon.” Who’s battle, is it? Who’s victory, is it? Who’s leading it? Yes, God’s victory, God’s battle, but under Gideon’s leadership.
- E. God is looking for leaders, those that will stand up and be counted, in the home, on the job, at the Church, among the city. He’s calling you to rise up, take your place, to be filled with courage and to lead.

1. **Judges 7:19-22** *“So Gideon and the hundred men who were with him came to the outpost of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, just as they had posted the watch; and they blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers that were in their hands. Then the three companies blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers—they held the torches in their hands and the trumpets in their right hands for blowing—and they cried, The sword of the Lord and of Gideon! And every man stood in his place all around the camp; and the whole army ran and cried out and fled. When the three hundred blew the trumpets, the Lord set every man’s sword against his companion throughout the whole camp; and the army fled to Beth Acacia, toward Zererah, as far as the border of Abel Meholah, by Tabbath.”*
- F. This is psychological warfare at its greatest point. This army is waking up to the sound of trumpets surrounding them (only 300), the sound of breaking glass, flaming torches with people yelling at O Dark Thirty (*the middle watch is the second watch, 12A-4A*).
- G. This is why God has whittled down Gideon’s army, because He Himself was going to do the work among the Midianites, not Gideon. The Lord set every man against each other. The Lord did this!

IV. CONCLUSION

- A. I hear God saying over you, over Legacy Church today, **ARISE!** Arise with confidence! It’s time to arise, it’s time to walk into your destiny, it’s time to fulfill God’s purposes for your life, it’s time to be assured of God’s nearness to you, His faithfulness over you, and His commitment to drive out your enemies.
- B. Beloved, God is making you into a leader. You might say, “leader of what?” We are all leaders, we all have influence over something and over someone. It might be your job, it might be your home, it might be your neighborhood, a team that your apart of, but somewhere in your life, you have leadership, and influence, and God desires you to use it for His glory and the good of others.
 1. **Hebrews 11:30-34**
- C. Gideon’s weakness was turned into strength, when? When he trusted God, when he embraced his true state, God’s power rested powerfully on Gideon’s life!
- D. Beloved, your situation isn’t too far gone. Your depression isn’t greater than God’s grace. Your sin isn’t more significant than God’s mercy. It means your children can never outrun your prayers and God’s oversight.
- E. Friends, it’s about faith in God that moves the obstacles of life! If you set your eyes on the 300, you will fail to see God. If you mourn the loss of the 21,700 soldiers you will despise the 300, and fail to see God move powerfully in your life.
- F. He won’t share His glory with another...therefore rejoice that He’s whittled your life down, and pressed you in, it means He’s about to demonstrate His power on your behalf. Embrace it!
- G. **ARISE!**