

## **From Zero to Hero (Gideon, Judges 6: 1-8, 8:35)**

Today we are going to look at a story about a man who goes from Zero to Hero. His name is Gideon who is also mentioned in Hebrews 11.

### **Background:**

In the beginning of Judges chapter 6 we read these dreaded words. “The children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord.” So God hands them over to the Midianites for 7 years.

Instead of worshiping God, they’re worshiping idols. Instead of enjoying the land flowing with Milk and Honey, the people of God are living in caves filled with fear.

The Midianites can be traced back to Abraham’s second wife, Keturah (Gen 25:1). These people have always been a problem. The Israelites almost destroyed them in Numbers 31, but now their back. At Harvest time they would steal all their food and cattle. Verse 5 says, “they were like locust, who were without number.”

The results were devastating, and this went on for 7 years until finally the children of Israel cried out to God for deliverance.

### **I. Gideon at the wine (whine) press:**

When the Angel of the Lord came, verse 11 says, “Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress so he could hide it from the Midianites.” The Angel said to Gideon, “The LORD is with you mighty warrior!” Then in verse 13, Gideon begins to whine in the wine press. Not only is he in the winepress physically, Gideon is in the wine press both spiritually and emotionally.

He says, “If the Lord is with us, why has such disaster overtaken us? Where are all the miracles our ancestors told us about? Did the Lord not bring us out of Egypt? But now the Lord has abandoned us and handed us over to Midian.”

Verse 14, The Angel says, “Gideon, I want you to go with the strength that you have and you will save Israel.”

Isn’t that a great lesson for today? There is a lot we can do with the strength that we have. Gideon thought he was too weak and too small in verse 15.

### **II. Gideon’s faith goes public: Judges 6:25-32**

In the next section, Gideon asks for a sign just to make sure God has chosen him and not somebody else. God sent fire down on an offering of meat and later shows another sign with the wool fleece. In between these events Gideon’s faith goes public. He destroys the altar of Baal and replaces it with an altar dedicated to God. When the towns people woke up the next morning, they hated what they saw and said Gideon needs to die.

Gideon's action inspired others. First, there were 10 and a little later 32,000. What does that say about having a faith that goes public? It inspires others.

Jesus said, "Let your light shine before men that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matt 5:16).

You can't win any battles down in the winepress! You've got to come out of the winepress and take your stand with God. When people see your good example, it inspires the rest of us to do what you are doing.

### **III. God's Victory through GIDEON: Judges 6:34 - 8:3**

When Gideon gave the signal, the men broke the pitchers, waved their torches, and blew on their trumpet. Then they were to shout, "The sword of the LORD and Gideon!" The noise caused the enemy to panic and they were terrified. When they saw the torches and heard the trumpets, they thought, "There are thousands of soldiers out there."

Verse 22 says, "And the LORD set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the army."

In the confusion with all the noise and the darkness, the two groups of enemies slaughtered each other. Before the night was over, 120,000 Midianites and Amalekites were dead. The only thing Gideon and his 300 hundred men had to do was stand up and make some noise for the Lord.

When I think about the power of the gospel, isn't that what we are to do? Make some noise for the Lord (tell people about Jesus) and God will do the rest. Do you remember those pitchers hiding the torches?

What does the New Testament say about hiding our lights? Break the pitcher, let the world see the light of Christ in you.

Matt 5:14, "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. "Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house."

#### **Close: Gideon's Failures:**

Gideon makes an Ephod, a garment normally worn by the priest and it gets turned into an idol. Verse 27 says, "He put the Ephod in his hometown and all of Israel prostituted themselves there."

We end up right where we started. Israel had peace for 40 years, but after this there would be no rest. Gideon started out like Moses but ended up like Aaron who made a golden calf for the Israelites to worship. Gideon reminds us to have a strong finish (Heb 12:1).