

Gideon's Conquest (Part 2)

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[0 : 00] Do take your Bibles and open them to the book of Judges.

And we're looking, of course, at the fifth judge, Gideon, and learning a lot, I hope, from Israel's fifth deliverer or judge by the name of Gideon, and we've looked at Gideon's call, which was an interesting story about his call, unique, really, among all the other judges.

We've looked at Gideon's confirmation. God confirmed, commissioned Gideon. And we've looked, or we are looking, at his conquest.

That's what we started to look at a couple of weeks ago, and tonight we're going to finish that up.

And so, again, just to remind you, the story of Gideon, well, I have to remind you of this, you know this, it contains some really interesting features, the story of Gideon.

And, you know, there are a number of the judges in the book of Judges that we remember, perhaps, better than we do the others. They're more noteworthy. There are some interesting parts of the story.

[1 : 26] I mean, who can't, who doesn't know the story about Samson, for example, possibly one of the most well-known judges. And then Gideon, because of these several interesting features in his story, and probably, you know, the most famous would be the putting out of the fleece.

And we kind of talked about that last week, and I hope that I satisfied you with that, though you may still have some questions about this fleece thing. You might not even agree with my position on it, but I gave it to you, and you just do what you want with it.

And then, of course, there's Gideon's 300 men. That is where God reduces Gideon's forces from 32,000 down to 300, a very, very interesting part of the story, of course.

And then, finally, we have the victory itself, the victory over the Midianites and the Amalekites and those people from the east, whomever they may have been.

And so we have that part of the story. It's won, you know, the victory is won with a shout, with a trumpet, a trumpet, rather, and with the breaking of pitchers and the shining of torches.

[2 : 40] And it's an interesting part of the story, and we'll get to that tonight. Now, these last two, then, these last two amazing features of Gideon's story will be our focus tonight.

And I don't want to read the entire passage here at the beginning. I did that last time, not last week, week before. We kind of read all the way through the better part of chapter 6 and chapter 7.

And this time I want to just kind of read it, the major part of it, as we go along and kind of, you know, kind of let this unfold for us in more of a narrative approach.

All right, so then, I've said that this portion of the story could be entitled under this heading, Gideon's Conquest. This is where we really get to the actual conquest, the actual work of delivering God's people.

And God brought about this great conquest, the battle, conquest rather, the battle is the Lord's. It's not Gideon's, though Gideon plays a very important part.

[3 : 45] And so this is the conquest, God's conquest through Gideon. And if you will remember a couple of weeks ago, I said that there were four, our four, movements of the story of Gideon's conquest.

Four movements in the story. We looked at two of them last time and to tonight. All right, the first one, just to remind you, Gideon's fame kind of begins with that kind of movement in the story.

In fact, really, all four of these movements in the story are a bit startling, some more than others. But all of them have this kind of effect that startles you.

And I've said this a number of times before. Four, the writer of Judges was a good writer and knew how to tell a story. Not that he's making this up.

It's all history. But how that story is conveyed, this history is conveyed, is really very interesting. And so all four of these movements have an element of surprise to us.

[4 : 51] And this first one, probably, you've not really seen, maybe, perhaps have not seen before. But, again, seemingly overnight, Gideon becomes a very famous man to not only his family, in the eyes of his family, but also in the eyes of the people.

And, again, to remind you, when we first met Gideon, where was he? He was hiding out in the wine press. And he even said, in verse 15 of chapter 6, My clan is the weakest in Manasseh.

Not only that, but I am the least in my father's house. And you couldn't get any lower than that. But this was his opinion of himself and, you know, his evaluation of himself.

And so that's how we... This is the Gideon we meet at the beginning. And then, now, Gideon is blowing a trumpet. And four tribes, the armies of four tribes, rally to his side.

And so quite a difference. And it's startling. It's meant to surprise you. And yet the explanation is really pretty clear to see there in verse 34 of chapter 6.

[5 : 57] But the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon. There's the answer to it. It turned him from an insignificant man who is, you know, quaking in fear, hiding out from his enemies, to a great leader and deliverer of Israel.

And the only explanation is that the Spirit of the Lord came upon him. Did this. So we have Gideon's fame. The second movement in the story, I will not spend as much time reviewing that because we talked a lot about this last time, but that would be Gideon's fleece.

Gideon's fleece. And so, obviously, and though some have tried to explain it otherwise, Gideon put God to the test, clearly, with this fleece, you know.

And it wasn't bad enough that he put God to the test, but he repeated the test in opposite form.

Gideon's faith was weak. I mean, that's the only conclusion we can come from, that valid conclusion that we can draw from that, that Gideon's faith was weak.

And yet God knew it was weak, and God accommodated his weak faith, which is a real encouragement to all of us. All right, so Gideon's fame, Gideon's fleece, and now we're ready to move forward and see the other two movements in the story.

[7 : 11] The third is Gideon's forces. Gideon's forces. And so Gideon has blown his trumpet. You know, the proverbial Gideon blowing his trumpet.

And four tribes of Israel responded. And Gideon asked for proof that he had indeed heard God correctly and that the battle would be his.

And so God confirmed it exactly the way Gideon asked of him. And now Gideon has assembled the armies of these four tribes, 32,000 troops.

32,000. That sounds like a lot, doesn't it? 32,000 fighting men. And so now both armies, the Midianites, Malachites, these people from the east, they're in position, and Gideon and 32,000 soldiers.

They are in their position, presumably ready to do battle. And it's interesting, I might just kind of point this out to you, it's interesting how their respective positions, geographically speaking, interesting how the author conveys their respective positions to describe for us something about the difference between Gideon's army and the army of the Midianites.

[8 : 40] Gideon's men are encamped, according to verse 1, beside the well, or really the preferable word would be spring, of Herod.

So they're encamped around the spring. The camp of the Midianites, the Bible says, was on the north side of them by the hill of Moreh in the valley.

Now, pay attention to that, in the valley. Now, I'm suggesting to you that this is the first indication the author is giving us of the disparity in the sizes of their respective armies.

Israel's army is small enough to encamp around a large spring, albeit it must be a large spring because later a good many of them are going to, well, 10,000 of them are going to gather around it and drink from it, but it's a large spring.

But their location is described by a relatively small land feature, a spring. But the Midianites' army is large enough to fill an entire valley.

[9 : 50] And that's just the first indication because this is no mere speculation about the disparity.

All we have to do is look at how it's described in the verses that follow because first, we have Gideon's forces and they number 32,000.

There's no debate, nothing vague about that. It's just clear in Scripture. Now, you might wonder about the even number, you know, 32,000, even number.

You know, I guess we could say around 32,000. But the Bible says clearly if you do the math, it's 32,000 according to verse 3. And so then what about the enemy's forces?

Well, we're not given an exact figure about how large the enemy's forces were. And why is that? Because they could not be counted. There was no way to count them.

They were almost numberless, too many to be counted. You know, look at verse 12 here in the passage. Now, the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the people of the east were lying in the valley as numerous as locusts.

[11:00] Now, that's pretty descriptive, isn't it? And we've all seen either movies or we've read about this, seen possibly pictures, you know, on TV, video on TV or pictures of this, a locust swarm and devastating an entire crop, acres and acres of crop and they come and mass these locusts.

And so what a way to describe the number of the enemy's soldiers or their armies. So many. It's like a swarm of locusts.

And then it goes on to say, and they're camels. You know, they rode camels, these people did. And they were, the Bible says, without number.

Now, obviously, this is hyperbole. They had a number but they could not be counted. They were without number. And as, very much like the sand by the seashore in multitude.

Now, that is an incredible description. And it's meant to be incredible. It's meant to be, to some extent, exaggerated. Unlike the numbers numbers put to the, to Gideon's army, 32,000.

[12:14] That's, it says it very, very plainly, very literally, literally, and we're to take it exactly that way. But in describing Midian's army, he uses, the author uses these images that are meant to, to surprise us and to be staggering and meant to, to put in our minds the disparity between the two, the vast difference between the two, the sizes of their armies.

All right, so, you know, just being reasonable and being just, just above board and honest, how could Gideon possibly think that 32,000 could conquer an army this size?

How could anybody think that that could be done? And how could Gideon's men who are on foot, doesn't mention anything about camels and horses or anything like that, and so we assume these are foot soldiers, how could Gideon's foot soldiers hope to battle against a vast army riding on camels?

I mean, oh yeah, these are people way up here. What an advantage over the enemy. I mean, how in the world? Outmanned, outprovisioned. Remember, the Bible says that they, the enemy wouldn't even allow them to have, have weaponry.

So they didn't even have swords or spears. They probably had some makeshift types of tools and we'll see kind of this played out a little bit later in the story. So they're outmanned, vastly outmanned and outprovisioned and outequipped.

[13:49] You know, the Midianites have this huge herd of camels. I guess herd is the right word for camels. I don't know.

All right, thank you, Wes. You googled that real quick, didn't you? Or you just know these things. All right. All right, so there is, there's every indication, I'm saying all this for a number of reasons, but there is every reason to believe that the, that most of Gideon's men could see the hopelessness of this.

right? I mean, wouldn't you? It's hopeless, a hopeless situation. And also, the author gives us an early clue about that, though we find this out very, very, very, very plainly and literally a little bit later in the story, but there's an indication of this, a clue to this earlier in the story.

Where were the Israelites encamped? Well, verse 1 tells us, beside the spring of Herod. Do you know what the word Herod means in the Hebrew?

I didn't know either until I looked it up, so I'm not trying to act like I'm so smart. Well, it means to tremble. Isn't that interesting? That the Israelites, Gideon's army, they are encamped by the spring of trembling.

[15:20] I mean, they're how descriptive. And that's exactly what the majority were doing. They were trembling. Trembling in fear. Now, if I were Gideon, you know, I think I would ask God for more troops, wouldn't you?

Maybe he just needs to get out his trumpet again and blow that thing again. Maybe he can get a few more tribes to respond. Now, if I were Gideon, that's what I do, I would be saying, God, we don't

have near enough troops here.

I mean, look at 32,000. And look over here, as many as a locust swarm. And we can't even count them. They fill up an entire valley.

I mean, God, listen, we need more troops. And of course, here's where the story takes a turn in a direction the reader is not expecting. Now, we expect it because we've heard the story, read the story.

But imagine reading this for the first time. And really, though I've read it a number of times, I'm still just kind of, you know, surprised by this. You know, it kind of shocks you.

[16:30] You have that sensation of shock. And that's what the reader is supposed to be thinking, supposed to be experiencing. You know, the reader is supposed to come to this place and be thinking, you know, there are too many Midianites for God to deliver them into the hands of the Israelites.

Too many Midianites. Rather than be thinking there are too many Israelites for God to deliver the Midianites into their hands. That's not what we would be thinking.

None of us would. Too many Israelites? Are you kidding? 32,000 compared to we don't even know how many.

But then we know why God said this. Why he said to Gideon, there are too many of you. Because we have it in verse 2, and the Lord said to Gideon, the people who are with you are too many for what?

For me. Now that's key to understanding this. Too many for me. Too many Israelites for me. For me to give the Midianites into their hands.

[17:43] Who's going to give the Midianites into their hands? God is. So there's just too many of you Israelites. Just too many. Because the victory has to belong to me.

That's what God is saying. And then God says, lest Israel claim glory for itself against me. So it's just very clear. God makes this very clear.

Or to put it in other words, lest Israel become boastful, prideful to many of you. The result will be pride. Because you're going to say, he says there, my own power has delivered me.

So you see, the point is not that God cannot win the battle with 32,000 Israelites. Of course he can. Of course he can. The issue is not what God can do.

The issue, the point here, is Israel's potential response to the victory if it is won with 32,000 soldiers. Even though, you know, they're vastly outnumbered, we could still say, well, you know, 32,000 is quite a few.

[18:54] And, hey, maybe we can win. And then suppose they do win. Who gets the credit? Well, you say, well, God would get some of the credit.

Well, yeah, I guess he'd get some of it. Thank you, Lord, for helping my 32,000 soldiers win this battle. But there's also, of course, the potential, even the prediction, God even predicts it, that the response would be, look what we did with our 32,000 soldiers, with just 32,000.

Can you see how this could produce pride? I mean, we did this just with 32,000 soldiers. All right, so God, then, is going to whittle down their numbers, isn't he?

And, kind of, kind of, there are two phases of this. First of all, God instructed Gideon to tell his army, just to tell this to them, whoever is fearful and afraid, let him turn and depart at once.

All right, if you're afraid, get out of here. go at once. Actually, the language is even somewhat stronger than that.

[20:12] It means, literally, let him turn around and fly. Not fly, but flee.

All right, how about that one? Although the word that is used there is used of a bird. It's descriptive of what birds are, they fly. But you understand the idea, you know, turn around, turn around away from the battle and get out of there, fly.

And 22,000 of Gideon's forces did just that. Immediately. And the language suggests that they did not even pack up their gear, because later the remaining soldiers, when we get all the way through this down to the 300, the remaining soldiers going to take the lanterns and the trumpets and the pottery, the whatever, pitchers, thank you, and the torches.

And so they didn't even pack up their gear, they got out of there. And he said, at once, turn around and flee. They did not even stay to say goodbye.

I think that's the idea here. They may have said, we're out of here. And they're gone. Ten, 22,000 of them. How would you have liked to have that question posed to you?

[21 : 45] If you're fearful, get out of here. And then how would you like to be one of those people? All right, so now Gideon is left with a paltry sum of what?

How many? 10,000 men. Just 10,000. That's not very many. 10,000 men to fight an enemy whose numbers are like the swarm of locusts and to battle against an enemy whose camels are as numberless as the grains of sand on the seashore.

That's incredible. And God says, what? All right, this will do. We'll work with this. Is that what he said? No, he said, you still have too many. What?

You see, the surprise factor here, the element in the story. Too many? I can't believe it. Too many? And so God whittles down that number again.

I mean, we know this story so well, backward and forward. Probably nothing I could tell you that you don't already know, you've not already heard. God says, there's just too many. And so God says in verse four, bring them down to the water and I will test them for you there.

[23 : 00] Literally, the word means to refine them. To refine them. He's going to whittle their numbers down by refining them. He's going to get out of there the ones that don't need to be there.

He's going to refine them. And he said, I will see what each one is made of. He says, I'm going to select the ones that are going to stay and the ones that are going to go. And how is he going to do this?

Well, he conducts this little test. You know, this famous little test. Verse five, so he brought the people down to the water, all ten thousand of them. And the Lord said to Gideon, everyone who laps from the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall set apart by himself.

Likewise, everyone who gets down on his knees to drink. drink. Now, this isn't two groups here, this is one group. The second part of this is intended to further describe this first group of people.

That is, the idea is, in order to lap the water like a dog, what do you have to do? You have to get down on all fours and stick your face down in the water and your tongue down in the water and lap it up.

[24 : 13] So that's one way to drink the water. water. And so, those who drank the water that way, they're to be put in one group. And God is saying, group together those who drink in that way on all fours, lapping the water like a dog.

Okay? Then, verse 6, and the number of those who lapped, putting their hand in their mouth. This is a different group. Different method.

That's the other way of drinking the water. This method is not getting down on all fours and sticking your tongue, your face and tongue down in the water, lapping it up and drinking it.

Maybe even slurping it up, you know, through your mouth. That's one way, but this way is to scoop up the water and put the water in a cupped hand, maybe two hands or one hand, and bring it up to your face and lap it like that.

That's quite different, different approach altogether. It may not be the most efficient approach, right? Because how much water can you hold in your hand or even two hands?

[25 : 23] It would be much more efficient possibly if you're really thirsty to get down there and just lap it up, though I can't really imagine doing that either. Alright, so not the most efficient way, but this was another way.

And so those who drank the water in this method were how many? Three hundred. Three hundred of them scooped the water up and lapped it with their tongue when they brought the water up to their face.

But all the rest of the people, it goes on to say, got down on their knees to drink water. Alright? And then God said the unthinkable.

He said, by the three hundred men who lapped, I will save you. These three hundred. And deliver the Midianites into your hand, let all the other people go, every man to his place.

Ninety-seven hundred of Gideon's men went home. Three hundred are left. That's amazing, isn't it? Now, you know, I think, I don't think it's speculation to say that the tests are obvious.

[26 : 36] The first phase of the test, the first phase of God's reduction of troops represents a test of courage. All those fearful and trembling, leave it once.

The second phase of God's reduction of troops represents a test of alertness. I mean, it's pretty clear. you can be much more alert if you're bringing the water up to your mouth and lapping it so that your eyes are free and your field of vision is open for you to keep an eye around you, keep an eye on the enemy.

It's nearly impossible to watch out for the enemy if you're going down on all fours and your face is in the water and you're lapping it up. So it's a test of alertness.

Courage and alertness. And yet the larger point is God's desire to deliver his people from their enemies in such a way that gets him all the glory.

That's really the point of all of this. There's going to be no explanation for Israel's defeating of the Midianites. No explanation other than it's miraculous, supernatural.

[27 : 50] God did it. You know what our problem is? Assuming you have a problem. Do you have a problem? You know what our problem is?

And I would say our problem in America. We can even narrow it down to that. Our biggest problem in America. Biggest problem with Americans.

And I would even say even more specifically the church in America. You know what our problem is? We're too strong for God.

So how can that be? God is all powerful. But we're too strong for God. That's really the lesson here where God is dwindling the Israelites forces down to 300 men.

You have too many for me to win this battle. God. And we in this country especially are just too strong for God. To the point that we don't need Him.

[28 : 57] And when we do need something desperately we have so many other resources other than just absolutely having to depend upon God.

We're too strong. We have so many fail safe and support systems that are put in. You know with our government I mean our government becoming more and more you know our big brother.

You know it takes care of everything and you can't fail anymore. Can't hurt can't die can't well I know it's a big sham but we're becoming more and more like that and we're just too strong.

2 Corinthians chapter 12 verse 9 Paul said that God said this to him he said my grace is sufficient for you. Remember this was when Paul was talking about his thorn in the flesh and he kept asking God asked him three times to remove this thorn in the flesh whatever it was and God said my grace is sufficient for you and then what did he say for my strength is made perfect in your weakness.

You know I was thinking about this again the other day I was watching the news and I remember now what the news story was but it kind of fit within the context of you know the government making sure that people don't suffer.

[30 : 21] We're just wanting to remove all suffering from our culture altogether. What if God wants you to suffer? You say God would want me to suffer? It's part of his design many times so that we can learn so we can trust him so we can grow in our faith.

There are many many reasons why God allows people to suffer and you know unbelievers need to suffer. And what we're trying to do is remove all suffering. And so that's why I say we're too strong for God.

Hebrews 11 34 God is talking about all those who are martyred for their faith there in Hebrews that famous chapter in Hebrews chapter 11 and he said that this of these martyrs among other things he said out of weakness they were made strong.

Now I don't think we ought to go out looking for suffering. We shouldn't go out looking for persecution. You know try to try to create that kind of thing in our lives.

But nor should we desire a certain kind of scenario or condition in life where we are free from all suffering. Where we don't have any challenges in life anymore.

[31 : 34] Because you know if we suffer economically we just go to the bank and take out a loan or a second mortgage. We don't have to pray to God say God I don't know where the money is going to come from.

If I get it you're going to have to provide it. We don't have to do that. And so we don't see the things that I think God wants to show us in life because we're too strong for him.

So Gideon's fame Gideon's fleece Gideon's forces and then one more very quickly Gideon's fight. This is where all of this has been moving us.

To where it has been moving us. To the battle. If you could call it a battle. Certainly not a battle in any traditional sense of the word.

Alright so Gideon took charge of this pathetically tiny band of men this army. 300. And he prepared prepared to face a vast army.

[32 : 37] The vast army of the Midianites. But before they go out to battle God once again provides for Gideon's weak faith. We have another example of it here. Even though this time it's not Gideon

who requests a confirmation from God.

Gideon didn't ask the question. It is God who takes the initiative because God knows what's in Gideon's heart. And so he is going to help him with his weak faith.

Even before the battle takes place and is won. And you know it is a comfort or should be a comfort to us that God knows our weak faith.

The weakness of our faith. He knows that. And so you can't hide it from him. No sense in trying to form your words just right in your prayers to try to convince God of something that's not true as if somehow he's just going to go on what you say and what you do.

God knows your heart. He knows the weakness of your faith. And God accommodates that. He knows that we're just dust. That doesn't mean that he doesn't want us to have faith and doesn't mean that our faith shouldn't be growing and that we shouldn't be doing all that God has required and the provisions he has given for our faith to grow.

[33 : 59] But God knows the weakness of our faith. He can't hide it from him. And so Gideon didn't hide it from God. And so in verses 9 through 15 we have God again accommodating Gideon's weakness, his faith.

And so it says there in verse 9 it happened on the same night that the Lord said to him arise go down against the camp for I've delivered it into your hands. So God is ready to go now. It's time to go or at least it seems that way.

And this is a promise isn't it? He says arise go down against the camp for I have delivered it into your hand. That is as if it were already done. It's a promise and so Gideon can take that to the bank. But and then God adds the but here but if you are afraid to go down not afraid to afraid to afraid to go down to the battle.

If you're afraid to go down to the battle. I think Gideon clearly was afraid. God would not have made this kind of accommodation for him. Verse 10 but if you are afraid go down to the camp with Purah your servant maybe kind of like a bodyguard and you shall hear what they say they the Midianites say and afterward after you hear what they say your hands shall be strengthened to go down against the camp.

[35 : 22] This is going to solve your your doubts and your fears and your weakness of faith you'll be ready to go down. Then he went down with Purah his servant to the outpost of the armed men who were in the camp.

So this was kind of like a guard post one of perhaps many that would have been around the perimeter of the camp of the Midianites and you know obviously Gideon and Purah are not just going to walk up to these guys they're hiding behind a bush and they're observing them and listening to what they have to say and this is what God instructed them to do.

And so verse 12 is a description and we'll not read that again but it's a description of the staggering size of the enemy's forces it's kind of put in there parenthetically or it is kind of Gideon's sudden observation and amazement as he draws near the camp and he sees just how big it is.

Then verse 13 look at it and when Gideon had come there was a man telling a dream to his companions so one of these guards is reciting a dream that he had had and he said I have had a dream to my surprise a loaf of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian it came to the tent and struck it so that it fell and overturned and the tent collapsed that's a weird dream isn't it now obviously God put the dream there alright that's how God that was God's preferred method of speaking to pagans through dreams he did that quite often and so God put the dream there in the mind of this pagan and God as he always did provided an interpreter for the dream you have to have an interpreter I mean my goodness you have to have an interpreter for that one what in the world could that mean and so verse 14 then his companion answered and said so God let his co-soldier there co-guard be the interpreter and this guard said an amazing thing 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 that's a pretty astounding thing for him to say I have kind of an idea that he said it and he didn't even know what he was saying God just moved his mouth and he spoke I mean how else could he come to that conclusion I mean just taking the dream by itself I mean how do you get all of that from this dream of a barley loaf tumbling down the slope you know and tumbling into the camp and knocking down tents and all that how do you go from there to this is none other than Gideon the sword of Gideon God has delivered the Midianites into his hand I mean it would almost be treason for him to say it in the first place how did he come up with that well I don't know God just put that thought into his head again I think maybe he even

spoke through him and so verse 15 says and so it was when Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation that he worshipped and he returned to the camp of Israel and said arise for the [38 : 42] Lord has delivered the camp of Midian into your hand so no doubts anymore and that's exactly what God said would happen he's ready to go so now Gideon is ready Gideon is confident and so let's read how it all turns out and I'll just kind of read this maybe say a few things along the way and we'll be finished here's the actual battle and it's really not the most important part of the story even though it's an incredible miracle and amazing and several amazing features in it but starting there with verse 16 then he divided the 300 men into three companies now that doesn't sound very smart you already have just 300 now you're going to divide them into 100s this is what God instructed him to do and he put a trumpet into every man's hand with empty pitchers and torches inside the pitchers any of that strike you as odd

I mean what is this 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 kind of like the dream the only problem was they didn't have any swords they didn't have any swords who had the swords the Midianites had the swords and they're going to use those swords we go on with the story here the sword of the sword so the sword is figurative so Gideon and the hundred men who were with him came to the outpost of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch in the darkest of night 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 left hands and the trumpets in their right hands for blowing and they cried the sword of the

Lord and of Gideon so you can kind of picture this you know they've got the trumpets in one hand and they have been carrying these torches but they have a pitcher over some vase or pottery of some kind so that it obscures the light of the torch until just the right moment they blow the trumpet and break that pitcher and so the torches you can imagine 300 torches all at one time coming into view and 300 trumpets that are blowing and continuing to blow because they continued this as they were surrounding the camp 100 at one side and 100 over here and 100 back here and they surrounded the camp and they do exactly what God commanded them to and what happened well verse 21 and every man stood in his place all around the camp and the whole army ran and cried out and fled when the 300 blew the trumpets the

Lord set every man's sword against his companion throughout the whole camp and the army fled to Bethacacia towards Zerorah as far as the border of Abel Mahoya Ah by Tabath I see the Israelites didn't have any swords they're crying out the sword of Gideon they didn't have any swords but the Midianites had all the swords and actually God took control of their swords and they basically killed themselves swinging swords and fighting one another in total confusion it's a great miracle isn't it you say and there are a number of lessons of course to draw from this applications to our lives and when you put these two things together about relying upon the strength of the

Lord even when it doesn't make any sense and not always trying to be so strong really knowing that God's strength is perfected in our weakness trusting him relying upon him even allowing ourselves to be in a place where we're utterly totally dependent upon him and then knowing then that when we we respond in that way to God then the battle is the Lord's he won the battle that day this great conquest of Gideon was really God's conquest and how important that is for our own lives all those battles that we face whether it's a health issue or financial issue or whatever it may be the battle is the Lord's trust him do what he tells you to do don't get out ahead of

[44 : 15] God don't rely upon your own strength allow God's strength to flourish in you and God will win the battle God to God to God to God to God to to to