

GIDEON: TRUSTING GOD'S WEIRD MATH
JUDGES 6-7

How much of a difference can one person make? I don't mean Winston Churchill or Beethoven or Christopher Columbus or Martin Luther or Louis Pasteur—I mean one plain vanilla, garden variety, face-in-the-crowd ordinary person... I mean a person like you...a person like me.

I mean a person like you and like me...PLUS GOD! I mean a person who has almost nothing to recommend herself or himself for a second glance except for an intrepid faith in what God can do with the yielded hands of an ordinary person.

So how would you define faith? Hebrews 11 says that *Faith is the substance of things hoped for—the evidence of things not seen*—but what does that really mean? How does it work practically in daily life?

Let me try to define faith this morning with a story. It's a true story. It's a story about an unlikely hero named Gideon.

Set-up the story:

- Seven years of domination by the Midianites in direct consequence of Israel's sin against God.
- Complete demoralization...
- *Because the power of Midian was so oppressive, the Israelites prepared shelters for themselves in mountain clefts, caves and strongholds.* --Judges 6:2

Judges 6:1-16, *Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD, and for seven years he gave them into the hands of the Midianites. ² Because the power of Midian was so oppressive, the Israelites prepared shelters for themselves in mountain clefts, caves and strongholds. ³ Whenever the Israelites planted their crops, the Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples invaded the country. ⁴ They camped on the land and ruined the crops all the way to Gaza and did not spare a living thing for Israel, neither sheep nor cattle nor donkeys. ⁵ They came up with their livestock and their tents like swarms of locusts. It was impossible to count the men and their camels; they invaded the land to ravage it. ⁶ Midian so impoverished the Israelites that they cried out to the LORD for help. ⁷ When the Israelites cried to the LORD because of Midian, ⁸ he sent them a prophet, who said, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I brought you up out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. ⁹ I snatched you from the power of Egypt and from the hand of all your oppressors. I drove them from before you and gave you their land. ¹⁰ I said to you, 'I am the LORD your God; do not worship the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you live.' But you have not listened to me." ¹¹ The angel of the LORD came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites. ¹² When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said, "The LORD is with you, mighty warrior." ¹³ "But sir," Gideon replied, "if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our fathers told us about when they said, 'Did not the LORD bring us up out of Egypt?' But now the LORD has abandoned us and put us into the hand of Midian." ¹⁴ The LORD turned to him and said, "Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand. Am I not sending you?" ¹⁵ "But Lord," Gideon asked, "how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family." ¹⁶ The LORD answered, "I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites together."*

- Gideon walks into the kitchen at 5:30 that night.

*Hello, dear, his wife asks, How did your day go today?
Oh, fine! Gideon replies. God appeared to me and we had a little chat. And I'm going to conquer the Midianites.
Oh, that's nice, Gideon! Will you set the table?*

- Can you imagine?! This man woke up a farmer and went to bed a general! Where did that come from? How was he to handle such an abrupt interruption in his life?

BIG IDEA: WITH GOD IN THE PICTURE, MY LIFE BECOMES AN IMPERATIVE TO ACTION.

I. GOD WANTS MORE OUT OF ME

- A. Despite My Insecurities. **Judges 6:15**, “*My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family.*”
- **MURPHY’S LAWS**—I wonder if they knew about Murphy’s Laws back then? Gideon would have liked these...
 1. When the going gets tough, everyone leaves.
 2. The bigger they are, the harder they hit.
 3. The longer you wait in line, the greater the chances you are in the wrong line.
 4. If everything is coming your way, you’re in the wrong lane.
 - How do you spell “SECURITY”? Having everything I need right at hand to solve a problem: money, tools, associates, momentum, skills and giftedness, education. All the stuff that makes me feel like: *I have everything under control! I can handle it!*
 - Security is driving to a new address with on-board GPS talking to me.
 - Insecurity is having no clue where I’m going. I know—I’ve been there.
 - Security is knowing I have a Visa card in my pocket with a \$15,000 credit limit
 - Insecurity is discovering I’ve lost my wallet
 - Security is pulling out the driveway for a multi-state family vacation in a brand new car.
 - Insecurity is crossing the Oregon border in the 1990 family sedan with 250,000 miles on the odometer.
 - Security is being asked by the boss to do a task I’ve done successfully 20 times before.
 - Insecurity is being asked by the boss to take on a new project that nobody has ever done before.
 - Security is coming to church on Sunday, singing a few songs, staying awake through the sermon, shaking a few hands, and then heading to a restaurant for lunch.
 - Insecurity is coming to church on Sunday and walking into a classroom where eight fifth grade boys think I’ve showed up to just spoil their fun!
 - Security is being totally confident in my own abilities.
 - Insecurity is being on my knees pleading with God pull out a miracle to get me through it.
 - *As a rule, the people whom we read about in Scripture who were called by God felt quite inadequate. When God called Abraham to leave home, or Gideon to lead an army, or Esther to defy the king, or Mary to give birth to the Messiah, their initial response was never: “Yes, I’m up to that challenge. I think I can handle that.”*
 - *Unbelief has its own wide vocabulary: “If...why...where...but... (J. Oswald Sanders).*
 - Look at Gideon’s mastery of this vocabulary of unbelief...
 - Gideon asks...
 - 1) Where’s God?! *“But sir,” Gideon replied, “if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our fathers told us about when they said, ‘Did not the LORD bring us up out of Egypt?’ But now the LORD has abandoned us and put us into the hand of Midian.” –Judges 6:13*
 - It would be nice if Gideon had simply replied—*Whatever you say, Lord. Like Mary, Be it done to me according to your word!*
 - But Gideon was too much like me...
 - Gideon asks...
 - 2) Who am I?! *14 The LORD turned to him and said, “Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian’s hand. Am I not sending you?” “But Lord,” Gideon asked, “how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family.” --Judges 6:15*
 - Despite the hopeless tone [**JUDGES 6:1-10—SEE INTRO**] of the prophet, **God does answer the cry of the Israelites**. He picks out a man for the job of deliverance.
 - **Judges 6:11**, *The angel of the LORD came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to*

keep it from the Midianites. 12 When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said, "The LORD is with you, mighty warrior."

SIDEBAR: THEOPHANIES

- A physical manifestation of Jehovah to men.
- Note the alternation between "the angel of the Lord" (**Judges 6:11,12**), and "the LORD" (**Judges 6:14**)
- Theophanies pop up every once in a while in the Old Testament. Another example is the time the Lord and two angels met with Abraham and enjoyed supper with him. Hagar saw the Angel of the Lord in the wilderness. The parents of Samson also met Him.

- Tonight at 6 o'clock your phone rings. It's missionary Greg Lyons calling you from Manila, Philippines. *Hey there, Greg says, I was just talking with Tim Walton and he recommended I give you a call. We're looking for two American families to help us pioneer a new outreach in one of the suburbs of Manila. What do you think?!*
 - Do you think you would have any questions? How about, *If...why...where...but...*
 - Raising financial support.
 - What about my IRA?
 - What about the children's education?
 - But I've never been to Bible school!
 - But—but—but...
 - Gideon has no vision of himself as deliverer. The only vision he has is of his own inadequacies. Note: When our faith is weak, we have a huge vision of our inadequacies. Nobody needs to tell us how small we are or how unqualified we are. It is brilliantly clear to our own selves.
 - Just like **Moses** (bad speaker).
 - Just like **Jeremiah** (just a child).
 - Just like **Isaiah** (a man of unclean lips).
 - But here is the huge secret weapon for us faith-wimps—for all of us Gideonites:
- B. Depending on His Adequacy. Judges 6:16, *The LORD answered, "I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites together."*
 - Look at how important it was for Gideon to be absolutely sure that God really would be with him! He wanted assurance so substantial that you could take it to the bank! **Judges 6:17**, *"If now I have found favor in your eyes, give me a sign that it is really you talking to me.*
 - Look how much God is willing to get us past our tunnel vision that sees only our own inadequacies!
 - **A Bicycle Built for Two**
 - At first I saw God as my observer, my judge,*
keeping track of the things I did wrong,
so as to know whether I merited heaven or hell
when I die.
He was out there sort of like a president.
I recognized his picture when I saw it,
But didn't really know him.
 - But later on when I met Christ,*
It seemed as though life were rather like a bike ride,
But it was a tandem bike and I noticed that Christ
Was in the back helping me pedal.
 - I don't know just when it was*
That he suggested we change places,
But life hasn't been the same since.
When I had control

*I knew the way.
It was rather boring, but predictable...
It was the shortest distance between two points.*

*But when he took the lead, he knew delightful long cuts,
Up mountains and through rock places
at breakneck speeds.
It was all I could do to hang on!
Even though it looked like madness,
He said, "Pedal!"*

*I worried and was anxious and asked,
"Where are you taking me?"
He laughed and didn't answer,
And I started to learn to trust.*

*I forgot my boring life and entered into the adventure.
And when I'd say, "I'm scared,"
He'd lean back and touch my hand.
He took me to people with gifts that I needed.
Gifts of healing, acceptance, and joy.
They gave me gifts to take on my journey,
My Lord's and mine.
And we were off again.*

*He said, "Give the gifts away;
They're extra baggage,
Too much weight."
So I did...to the people we met.
And I found that in giving I received,
And still our burden was light.
I did not trust Him, at first, in control of my life.
I thought He'd wreck it;
But He knows bike secrets,
Knows how to make it bend to take sharp corners,
Knows how to jump to clear high rocks,
Knows how to fly to shorten scary passages.*

*And I am learning to shut up and pedal
In the strangest places,
And I'm beginning to enjoy the view
And the cool breeze on my face
With my delightful, constant companion,
Jesus Christ.
And when I'm sure I just can't do anymore,
He just smiles and says..."Pedal!"*

(Author unknown)

- “[H]aving to depend solely on God” is what we all dread most. --C.S. Lewis
(in a letter to an America woman named Mary, December 16, 1955 in *letters to an American Lady*, 49)
- Look at how God graciously gave reassurance to Gideon:
God's Reassurance
A fire miracle

Judges 6:21, *With the tip of the staff that was in his hand, the angel of the LORD touched the meat and the unleavened bread. Fire flared from the rock, consuming the meat and the bread. And the angel of the LORD disappeared.*

God's Reassurance

A water miracle

Judges 6:36-38, *Gideon said to God, "If you will save Israel by my hand as you have promised-- 37 look, I will place a wool fleece on the threshing floor. If there is dew only on the fleece and all the ground is dry, then I will know that you will save Israel by my hand, as you said." 38 And that is what happened. Gideon rose early the next day; he squeezed the fleece and wrung out the dew-- a bowlful of water.*

God's Reassurance

A dry miracle

Judges 6:39-40, *Then Gideon said to God, "Do not be angry with me. Let me make just one more request. Allow me one more test with the fleece. This time make the fleece dry and the ground covered with dew." 40 That night God did so. Only the fleece was dry; all the ground was covered with dew. --Judges 6:40*

- **D. L. Moody**...was innocent of formal education. His letters...are full of grammatical errors. His physical appearance was not impressive. His voice was high-pitched and his tones nasal....A reporter was sent to cover Moody's campaigns in Britain...and to discover the secret of his power. After considerable observation he recorded, "I can see nothing whatever in Moody to account for his marvelous work." When Moody read the report, he chuckled, "Why that is the very secret of the movement. There is nothing in it that can explain it but the power of God. The work is God's, not mine." (**J. Oswald Sanders**, *Spiritual Manpower*, Chicago, Moody, 1965, 100)

BIG IDEA: WITH GOD IN THE PICTURE, MY LIFE BECOMES AN IMPERATIVE TO ACTION.

II. GOD WANTS LESS OUT OF ME

- A. I Must Take Initiative. Judges 6:34-35, *Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet, summoning the Abiezrites to follow him. ³⁵ He sent messengers throughout Manasseh, calling them to arms, and also into Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali, so that they too went up to meet them.*
- The Abiezrites were a sub-set of the tribe of Manasseh. Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali were also tribes of Israel—just to the north of Manasseh, wrapping around the west side of the Sea of Galilee.
 - You know, it's one thing to do a gutsy thing for God yourself. It is an entirely different thing to summon other people to do it with you. It's one thing for you to risk your neck. It's another thing to ask other people to risk their necks with you. After all—*Who are you?!*
 - I've summoned a lot of people to action over the years. Not everybody shows up. In fact, I would have to be honest and say that most people DON'T show up.
 - This is pretty amazing that so many people showed up—32,000!!!
 - But notice one key little statement in **verse 34**: *Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon...*
 - **How does one get traction in a weightless world?** --**Brian McLaren** (Brian McLaren, *Reinventing Your Church*, Grand Rapids, MI, Zondervan Publishing Company, 1998, 184)
 - Let's play with that statement a minute.
 - *A weightless world*: Do you agree with that? Do you agree that anything in the world without God is ultimately weightless?
 - **Pharoah** didn't look weightless to Moses—but God drowned his army and Moses didn't have to lift his hand.
 - **Goliath** didn't look weightless—but he was defeated by one small, smooth stone guided by the hand of God.

- **Your crisis** doesn't look weightless—but have you factored in the weightiness of God?
 - **Your adversary** doesn't look weightless—but have you factored in the weightiness of God?
 - *How does one get traction?*
 - I have a rear-wheel drive **F150 pick-up truck**. I have a traction problem. On a rainy morning I can't pull away from a stop sign without spinning the wheels. A snowy morning commute is a real adventure. If I want to improve traction I have to throw some extra weight in the back.
 - Think about spiritual traction in the Christian life. You have to plant both feet firmly, lean into it, and push. Imagine you're pushing against a 300# NFL linebacker! Think your feet might slip?
 - Pretty good approximation of what it's like to try to do anything spiritually significant for God in this world.
 - Cf. **Ephesians 6:10**, *Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. [like a 300# NFL linebacker!] 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 14 Stand firm then...*
 - So where do I get **the weight** to gain **overcoming traction** against such fearsome opposition?
 - **ANSWER: Judges 6:34**, *Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet, summoning the Abiezrites to follow him. Literally, The Spirit of the Lord clothed himself with Gideon.*
 - Imagine that! If God drapes me over his shoulders—then I am implicated with the weight of God. The world sees only wimpy little ole me. But the angels see the power of God and me going along for the ride. With God, my **size nine feet** bore into the earth with **heaven's posi-traction**.
- B. But God Wants to Get the Credit. Judges 7:2, *The LORD said to Gideon, "You have too many men for me to deliver Midian into their hands. In order that Israel may not boast against me that her own strength has saved her, 3 announce now to the people, 'Anyone who trembles with fear may turn back and leave Mount Gilead.'" So twenty-two thousand men left, while ten thousand remained.*
- **G.K. Chesterton:** *It has often been said, very truly, that religion is the thing that makes the ordinary man feel extraordinary; it is an equally important truth that religion is the thing that makes the extraordinary man feel ordinary.--G.K. Chesterton, on great men, Biography of Charles Dickens November 22nd, 2005*

Here Is God's "Weird Math":
Start with 32,000 soldiers Minus 22,000 soldiers Subtotal 10,000 soldiers (7:4: Too many!) Minus 9,700 soldiers Grand Total 300 soldiers
Gideon was outnumbered 450:1. <i>Palpably absurd--J. Oswald Sanders.</i>

Judges 7:4-8, *But the LORD said to Gideon, "There are still too many men. Take them down to the water, and I will sift them for you there. If I say, 'This one shall go with you,' he shall go; but if I say, 'This one shall not go with you,' he shall not go." ⁵ So Gideon took the men down to the water. There the LORD told him, "Separate those who lap the water with their tongues like a dog from those who kneel down to drink." ⁶ Three hundred men lapped with their hands to their mouths. All the rest got down on their knees to drink. ⁷ The LORD said to Gideon, "With the three hundred men that lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hands. Let all the other*

men go, each to his own place." ⁸ So Gideon sent the rest of the Israelites to their tents but kept the three hundred...

- Why does God like weird math? ANSWER: *Because, when the dust settles, everybody knows it's a God-thing and not a human-thing. We get the blessing, but He gets the glory.*
- Some people say, "God will never ask me to do something I can't do." *I have come to the place in my life that, if the assignment I sense God is giving me is something that I know I can handle, I know it is probably not from God. The kind of assignments God gives in the Bible are always God-sized. They are always beyond what people can do, because he wants to demonstrate his nature, his strength, his provision, and his kindness to his people and to a watching world. This is the only way the world will come to know him.*" -- Henry Blackaby (quoted in John Ortberg, *If You Want to Walk on Water, You've Got to get Out of the Boat*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 2001, 70)
- Every day, you and I face a choice:
 - On the one hand, we can live our Christian life in the shallow water of faith, on the margins of the spiritual conflict. We can choose to be relatively inoffensive to the Devil. We can read our Bibles, go to church, have a few nice Christian friends, and pretty much let it go at that.
 - On the other hand, we can choose to do things that are **dangerous to the Devil**:
 - We can get involved in a cause that tampers with the Devil's turf:
 - like PRC
 - or a mission trip
 - or helping to start a marriage ministry
 - or signing on as volunteer staff with Youth for Christ at Alderwood Middle School
 - We can choose to become influencers of other people for Jesus:
 - Become a small group leader this fall...
 - Volunteer to be an AWANA small group leader with kids...
 - Please do not minimize things like this! Small groups are not small things!
 - How about just committing to approach and meet one new person every Sunday? How about every other Sunday? Once a month?

BIG IDEA: WITH GOD IN THE PICTURE, MY LIFE BECOMES AN IMPERATIVE TO ACTION.

III. GOD WANTS ACTION OUT OF ME

- A. There's a Time for Hand-Holding. Judges 7:10, *If you are afraid to attack, go down to the camp with your servant Purah 11 and listen to what they are saying. Afterward, you will be encouraged to attack the camp.*"
- By the way...
 - God didn't need Gideon.
 - God didn't need Gideon's 300 men.
 - As it was, Gideon and his 300 men just stood around watching while the enemy soldiers killed each other!
 - Gideon and his men didn't really get in on the action till the mop-up operations.
 - God never *needs* us to get His work done. He graciously lets us get in on the action. He lets us help him like a daddy letting his little child "help" him plant a tree in the backyard. It slows Him down—but it's awfully good for us to get to participate.
 - But, nevertheless, it's scary stuff!
 - **FDR's Inauguration speech, March 4, 1933**, *So first of all let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself—nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance.*
 - God knows that. God speaks to that. The most frequent command in all the Bible is ***Be not afraid***.—366 times. One for every day of the year plus an extra for Leap Year.
 - God is an encourager!
 - **Judges 7:9-15**, *During that night the LORD said to Gideon, "Get up, go down against the camp, because I am going to give it into your hands. ¹⁰ If you are afraid to attack, go down to the camp with your servant Purah ¹¹ and listen to what they are saying. Afterward, you will*

be encouraged to attack the camp." So he and Purah his servant went down to the outposts of the camp. ¹² The Midianites, the Amalekites and all the other eastern peoples had settled in the valley, thick as locusts. Their camels could no more be counted than the sand on the seashore. ¹³ Gideon arrived just as a man was telling a friend his dream. "I had a dream," he was saying. "A round loaf of barley bread came tumbling into the Midianite camp. It struck the tent with such force that the tent overturned and collapsed." ¹⁴ His friend responded, "This can be nothing other than the sword of Gideon son of Joash, the Israelite. God has given the Midianites and the whole camp into his hands." ¹⁵ When Gideon heard the dream and its interpretation, **he worshiped God.** He returned to the camp of Israel and called out, "Get up! The LORD has given the Midianite camp into your hands."

- **NOTE:** This is pure gravy! Gideon didn't ask for it.
- Imagine this—a pagan bad guy telling another pagan bad guy a bedtime Bible story!!!
- No wonder Gideon fell on his face in spontaneous worship!
- God probably sent servant Purah with him just to pinch him to see if this was for real!!!
Hey Purah, did you hear what I think I just heard?! Did that guy really say, "Gideon"??!

B. And There's a Time for **Sword-Holding**. Judges 7:17, "Watch me," he told them. "Follow my lead. When I get to the edge of the camp, do exactly as I do."

- George McClellan was appointed commander of the Union Army by President Abraham Lincoln. But he was constantly carping about the war—he complained it was being fought against slavery instead of against the Confederate Army. McClellan repeatedly refused to go on the attack, saying Lincoln hadn't planned or provided the Union Army with sufficient armor. Finally, Lincoln fired McClellan in a letter that read, "My dear McClellan: If you don't want to sue the Army I should like to borrow it for awhile." --Ann Coulter, *Godless*, 138.
- Watch how Gideon took faith-action:

Gideon's Action Steps

Step #1—Demolition

"Bring out your son. He must die, because he has broken down Baal's altar and cut down the Asherah pole beside it." --Judges 6:30.

He tears down his father's Baal altar and the Asherah pole (risky stuff—the townspeople wanted to kill him on the spot.

- Baal: the great fertility god of the Canaanites.
- Asherah: A Canaanite mother goddess and goddess of the sea.

NOTE: Now he gets a new name: Gideon is now known as *Baal-contender!!!* (**Judges 6:32**)

Gideon's Action Steps

Step #2—Influence

Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet, summoning the [Israelites] to follow him.--Judges 6:34

- He calls others to join him in an adventure of faith.
 - Abiezrites (verse 34)
 - Manasseh (verse 35)
 - Asher
 - Zebulun
 - Naphtali
- Note how our active faith changes the future and draws in others. Be an influencer for God!
 - Note the building of momentum: first Gideon. Then 300. Then thousands...

Gideon's Action Steps

Step #3—Attack

Judges 7:17 *When I get to the edge of the camp, do exactly as I do. 18 When I and all who are with me blow our trumpets, then from all around the camp blow yours and shout, 'For the LORD and for Gideon.'"*

19 Gideon and the hundred men with him reached the edge of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, just after they had changed the guard. They blew their trumpets and broke the jars that were in their hands.

- Why is there such a thing as risk? Because there is such a thing as ignorance. If there were no ignorance there would be no risk. Risk is possible because we don't know how things will turn out. This means that God can take no risks....But not so with us. We are not God; we are ignorant. We don't know what will happen tomorrow. God does not tell us in detail what he intends to do tomorrow or five years from now. --John Piper
- Bottom line: **Gideon did it! He acted. He said yes to God.**
 - **And God showed up—brilliantly!**
 - **Judges 7:18-25**, When I and all who are with me blow our trumpets, then from all around the camp blow yours and shout, 'For the LORD and for Gideon.'" 19 Gideon and the hundred men with him reached the edge of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, just after they had changed the guard. They blew their trumpets and broke the jars that were in their hands. 20 The three companies blew the trumpets and smashed the jars. Grasping the torches in their left hands and holding in their right hands the trumpets they were to blow, they shouted, "A sword for the LORD and for Gideon!" 21 While each man held his position around the camp, all the Midianites ran, crying out as they fled. 22 When the three hundred trumpets sounded, the LORD caused the men throughout the camp to turn on each other with their swords. The army fled to Beth Shittah toward Zererah as far as the border of Abel Meholah near Tabbath. 23 Israelites from Naphtali, Asher and all Manasseh were called out, and they pursued the Midianites. 24 Gideon sent messengers throughout the hill country of Ephraim, saying, "Come down against the Midianites and seize the waters of the Jordan ahead of them as far as Beth Barah." So all the men of Ephraim were called out and they took the waters of the Jordan as far as Beth Barah. 25 They also captured two of the Midianite leaders, Oreb and Zeeb. They killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb at the winepress of Zeeb. They pursued the Midianites and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon, who was by the Jordan.
 - God used the obedient faith of one very unlikely man **to rally** a demoralized people. To **save a nation from ruination for the next 40 years.**
 - **II Corinthians 10:4**, The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.
 - And thus an ordinary man became an intrepid hero of faith...
 - **Hebrews 11:32**, And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about **Gideon**, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets, 33 who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose **weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies.**

BIG IDEA: WITH GOD IN THE PICTURE, MY LIFE BECOMES AN IMPERATIVE TO ACTION.
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So, I wonder what spiritual adventure God is calling you to this year? ...and me?!

CONCLUSION:

There is an old story "about a man who was driving his truck on a narrow mountain road. To his right was a cliff that dropped precipitously nearly 500 feet to a canyon below. As the driver rounded a curve, he suddenly lost control of the vehicle. It plunged over the side and bounced down the mountain, bursting into flames at the bottom. Although the terrified man was ejected as his truck went over the edge, he managed to grab a bush that grew near the top. There he was, frantically holding the small limb and dangling precariously over the abyss. After trying to pull himself up for several minutes, he called out in desperation, 'Is anybody there?'

"In a few seconds, the thundering voice of the Lord echoed across the mountain. 'Yes, I am here,' He said. 'What do you want?'

"The man pleaded, 'Please save me! I can't hold on much longer!'

After another agonizing pause, the voice said, 'All right. I will save you. But first you must turn loose of the limb and trust Me to catch you. Just release your grip now. My hands will be under you.'

"The dangling man looked over His shoulder at the burning truck in the valley below, and then he called out, 'Is anybody else there?'" (Dobson, When God Doesn't Make Sense, p.25)

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