

# OPEN BIBLE CHURCH

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**SERMON TITLE** From Survival to Revival

**SERIES**

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**KEY SCRIPTURE** Judges 6-7

**SYNOPSIS** The story of Gideon shows how we can go from survival to revival.

**HIGHLIGHTS**



## ☞ FROM SURVIVAL TO REVIVAL

### Judges 6-7

The story of Gideon shows how we can go from survival to revival.

#### Judges 6:3-6

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.

Midian = strife; conflict

Amalek = frustration; worry; doubt

Most everybody experiences strife and conflict in life. Perhaps at work there are conflicts with other employees or your boss. It could be conflict at home with family members. Strife and conflict come in various ways and are common in this fallen world. That's why we are admonished to work hard at unity within the church. There's enough conflict in our lives without adding to it with our church family.

In addition to strife and conflict, I know what it is to have frustrations, worries, and doubts. How about you? Some of the frustrations can come from the strife and conflict we just mentioned. Financial concerns can cause a lot of worries in your life. When you're living from paycheck to paycheck and even that seems stretched, worries tend to come on strong.

When you've been praying about those finances or those relationships that are in conflict, but the answers are slow in coming, it can lead to doubt. "Does God really answer prayer? Does God really care? Are his promises really true? Will he really come through?" Those questions are common and you can find good company when you read the Psalms, as people throughout the ages have experienced the same frustrations, worries, and doubts.

All of these issues are only worse when you're not walking closely with the Lord. In fact, I think ☞ I can guarantee you that **if you're walking away from God, your conflicts, frustrations, and worries will only increase**. In this case, the Israelis were in one of those seasons when they weren't walking with God and their troubles multiplied. But, thankfully, they finally cried out to God.

If you've been dealing with overwhelming conflicts and frustrations, have you sincerely turned to the Lord? Have you gone whole-hog in seeking him for help?

#### Judges 6:11

Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites



Gideon was dealing with all those troubles along with the rest of the Israelis and here we see that he is just trying to survive. Thriving? Hardly! Just surviving. And, then the Lord comes on the scene. And God, instead of solving all of his problems, calls Gideon to go and save Israel.

☞ Here's a point to consider: **when you're troubled and discouraged, sometimes the best thing you can do is reach out and help somebody else.** I know that seems counterintuitive, but it often works.

Proverbs 11:25

The generous will prosper; those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed

Isaiah 58 says that when we help others who are oppressed and in need, then we will receive healing and be strengthened. This is how the kingdom of God works. Jesus said that the merciful will receive mercy in Matthew 5. When you're struggling and in need, you will find that reaching out to help others will make you feel better. But Gideon responded like so many often do:

**Judges 6:15** "how can I? My clan is the weakest, and I am the least."

This isn't just a low opinion of himself. These statements are actually pretty accurate. He wasn't ☞ really any big deal in Israel. But **God loves to use the little guy to accomplish his purposes.** Joseph was the next to youngest in his family, but he saved Israel. David was just a boy when he defeated Goliath.

1 Corinthians 1:26-29

Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. 28 God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, 29 so that no one may boast before him.

You feel like the least in your situation? You think someone else is more qualified and able? Then, you're in good company *and* you're the kind of person God is looking for.

**Judges 6:33** shows us that these conflicts, frustrations and worries can be relentless. The Midianites, Amalekites and others joined forces to bring trouble to Israel. But, now Gideon is beginning to step into his calling and we pick up the story in chapter 7.

**Judges 7:1-3**

Early in the morning, Jerub-Baal (that is, Gideon) and all his men camped at the spring of Harod. The camp of Midian was north of them in the valley near the hill of Moreh.

Harod = trembling; fear

Moreh = stretching



Even though he was obeying the Lord, Gideon still had fears and he was definitely being ☞ stretched. I guarantee **when you step out and begin following God's calling on your life, you will be stretched.** It's gonna happen.

So, Gideon is feeling uncertain and he is being stretched and then God says, "You have too many men for me to deliver Midian into their hands." Ok...?!? So, Gideon gives his soldiers the option to bail and 22,000 leave him so he's down to only 10,000 against 135,000. The odds were 4 to 1; now it's 13 to 1. And, then in verse 4 God says, "There are still too many men. Take them down to the water, and I will sift them for you there."

God separates those who were focused, alert and battle ready from those who were self-indulgent and as a result 97% of the soldiers are let go. Gideon is now down to only 300. Now the odds are 450 to 1. Sounds great! Not!

If we really believe Zechariah 4:6, *not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the LORD*, then our smallness does not matter. This is true for each of us as individuals. It's also true for us as a church. I remember several years ago, even before COVID, a minister at convention said that God was Gideonizing the church. And in the past couple of years, that process has accelerated.

☞ **We aren't as large as we once were, but God can still work with that.**

Gideon wasn't quite that confident just yet. He had already been uncertain, fearful and insecure. I can only imagine how he was feeling now. Verse 10 indicates that he was afraid and God knew it. So, in his loving character, God makes sure to encourage Gideon. Under God's instructions, he overhears a man telling about a dream he had. It was no accident that the man dreamed the dream that night; no accident that he told his friend about it at just that moment; no accident that Gideon came to the exact place where he overheard the man telling the ☞ dream. That's **God – he can arrange impossible "coincidences" to accomplish his purposes.**

It must have built the faith of Gideon to know that his enemies were afraid of *him*. He had thought of himself as pretty weak and insignificant, but his enemies saw him as a real threat. ☞ Did you know that **the Devil is afraid of you?** At least he is **when you are praying, resisting his influence, and following the Lord.** James 4:7. Once Gideon realized this, he worshiped God and spoke to his men with confidence. "The Lord has given the Midianite camp into your hands." Notice how Gideon quotes God's promise of victory to the soldiers. He was **relying solely on the Word of God. We also need to stand on God's Word.**

From this point, we see a unique strategy in taking on the enemy. He divides his men up into three, 100-man groups armed with nothing but trumpets and jars with torches inside. It's really incredible that there is no evidence of his men doubting his leadership. It seems they were ready to follow Gideon no matter what. We all need some friends like that, who will stand with us no matter what. And, we need to be that kind of person to our friends.



When Gideon gave the signal, they blew the trumpets and broke the jars. Then with the torches blazing in their hands, they shouted, “A sword for the Lord and for Gideon!” Here’s the shout again; the war cry. Just like last week, this can be a literal shout or a joyful song of praise. And it’s also a testimony of God at work. **Your testimony is a war cry.**

There’s some cool symbolism in the trumpets, torches and jars. According to 2 Corinthians 4, we are the jars of clay and the torches are the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ. Just as the jars in Gideon’s story were broken and the light of the torches shone forth, so when we are broken for whatever reason, we must let the light of Christ shine. As we let his light shine in spite of our troubles, it trumpets the gospel of Christ. **You can be a living testimony just by the way you handle adversity.**

At this point, the enemies panicked, turned on each other and fled the scene. Gideon’s men simply held their position and stood firm. When you’re struggling with fear, frustration, conflict and confusion, trust God and stand firm!

1 Corinthians 15:58

Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

The enemy is using everything in his arsenal to get you to give up. When you stand firm, trusting the Lord in all circumstances, it drives the devil crazy. **When you keep on keeping on, the enemy loses and you win!**

Now, once Gideon and his men got the ball rolling, more and more Israelis joined the fight and pursued the enemy. **Your faithfulness and your testimony will inspire others.** As a result, the enemy army fled as far as the border of Abel Meholah near Tabbath.

Abel Meholah = meadow of dancing  
Tabbath = celebrated

When you stand firm and trust God completely; when you give a war cry with your testimony and continue giving yourself fully to God’s work, it encourages others and the enemy flees. And as you keep on keeping on, it eventually leads to celebration.

**God gives the victory and we rejoice! We go from survival to revival. (music will start)**

I wonder, are you feeling overwhelmed, like you’re outnumbered and the enemy has the upper hand? Feeling like you’re not quite up to facing the struggle? How about being stretched in your calling? The altar is open. It’s time to turn to God. It’s time to resist the enemy with prayer.

If you’re struggling with discouragement, maybe it’s time for you to reach out and minister to someone else. By doing so, you will help yourself.