

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

The Promised Land

GIDEON

Judges 6:1-7:25

Elementary Lesson

Year One, Quarter Three, Lesson Ten

[0350]

AIM: to use the story of the triumph of Gideon to teach my students that if the Lord is fighting for you, it does not matter how many are fighting against you.

OBJECTS TO HAVE: A kickball and a volleyball
 A trumpet, a pitcher, and a torch
 Your Bible

POINT OF CONTACT: I like to play games. Do any of you like to play games? I like to play games where we break up into teams. Have any of you ever played kickball? I like kickball! When you play kickball, you break up into two teams, and one team goes out into the field while the other team is “up”. Then after three outs, the two team switch sides. Now here’s what I want to ask you: if you are going to split into two teams for kickball, and if Team #1 has 6 people on it, if we are going to be fair, how many people should Team #2 have on it? That’s right, 6. Why? So the game will be even. Do you know what you would call it if the other team had 9 players, and you only had 6? You would call it being *outnumbered*.

How about volleyball? How many of you have ever played volleyball? Let’s pretend you are going to play volleyball with two teams. If one team has 5 players, how many players should the other team have, to be fair? That’s right, 5. If you had 5 people, but the other team had 10, you would be what...*outnumbered*, that’s right.

Can you imagine if two teams were playing volleyball, and one team had 100 people on it, while the other team only had 2 people on it? Would that be fair? It doesn’t seem like it would be, does it? No, the team with 2 people would be **outnumbered**.

But here’s what I want you to remember today: if God is on your team, kids, it doesn’t matter how many people are on the other side: **YOU CAN’T LOSE!!** If God is on your team, you are never **outnumbered**.

Today I am going to tell you about some men who seemed like they were **outnumbered**...BUT, they had God on their side.

STORY: For the last few weeks we have been talking about how Joshua and the army of Israel entered the Promised Land. God helped them to win many battles and defeat many wicked nations, until finally the land was theirs. God kept His Promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and gave this land to their descendants.

Now we come to a time many years later. Joshua has died, and so have all of the people who were alive when Joshua was alive. The people of Israel have gotten used to the Promised Land, they have built houses, farms and businesses, and they have their own nation, the nation of Israel.

But one thing they did not have was a king. There was no leader in charge of the nation, no one to make the rules, no one to lead the people to do right. Because there was no great leader like Moses or Joshua, all of the people did whatever they wanted to do. This caused this brand new nation of Israel to get itself into trouble. Very soon they had turned their backs on God, and they were sinning and rebelling against Him.

Any time we rebel against and we do not get our hearts right with Him, God allows us to reap the fruit of our own ways. You see, sin always brings death, and if we do not get right with God about our sin, bad things happen. God allowed the nation of Israel to fall into the hands of some wicked people. These wicked people were called the *Midianites*. The Midianites came into the land of Israel and stole the things that Israel had worked hard for. Every year the Israelites would plant fruit and vegetables, they would take care of the plants all year long, and then just when it was time to pick what they had planted, the Midianites would come in with their armies and steal their food. This happened year after year, so that soon the Israelites had no food and no money.

Finally, the Israelites turned to God and said, “We are sorry for our sin. Please forgive us. God, please help us.” God forgave them and answered their prayers. God came one day to a young man named *Gideon*. God sent an angel to Gideon to say, “God wants you to fight the Midianites.”

Gideon said, “I am just one man, and the Midianites are strong! What can I do?” But God convinced Gideon that if he would do what God told him to do, he could lead the Israelites to defeat the Midianites.

Sometimes God does call us to do things that we think we cannot do. We say, “God, how can I possibly win at this? I am just a nobody, and the thing you have asked me to do is too hard!” But if God is fighting for you, it doesn’t matter who your enemy is—you will win!

Gideon obeyed God’s call to lead his people to fight off the Midianites. The Bible says that there were so many of the Midianites that they looked like a big swarm of grasshoppers. (Judges 6:5). How were they going to defeat all of those soldiers?

Gideon sent out a message to the men of the land, telling them to come and fight with him against the Midianites. Do you know how many men showed up? 32,000 men showed up to fight the Midianites. That may sound like a lot, but compared to the hundreds of thousands of Midianites, that wasn’t very many. So Gideon went to God and said, “God, I got everybody I could find to help us fight the Midianites. It’s only 32,000 men. I hope that’s enough.”

God said, “No, Gideon, that’s too many.” Too many? Gideon thought it wouldn’t be enough. How were they too many? Didn’t they need every man they could get? God said, “Gideon, make an announcement that everybody who is afraid should just go home.”

So Gideon stood up and announced, “Thank you for coming everybody, but if any of you are afraid to fight, you can go home now.” When Gideon said that, it looked like more men were leaving than staying. 22,000 men picked up their things and went home scared. That left only 10,000 to fight for Israel, against hundreds of thousands of Midianites. Gideon went back to God and said, “Okay, Lord, how is that?”

God said to Gideon, “No, Gideon, there are still too many.” Still too many? How can 10,000 men be **still too many**? But God said, “Take these men down to the river, and we’ll find out who else should go home.”

So Gideon took these men down to the river in the hot sun, and said, “Alright men, time for a break.” It was very hot outside, and these men were sweaty, tired, and thirsty. So most of them dove right into the water to cool off. Some of them were taking buckets and dumping the cool water over their heads. Some were splashing and swimming and cooling off. But just a few men...300 all together...were more concerned with the battle than they were with cooling off. So these 300 men just leaned over and scooped up a little water, and drank it quickly like a dog does, while they watched carefully for the enemy.

God said to Gideon, “These 300 can stay. Everyone else should go home.”

After the thousands of men left, Gideon said, “Lord, is that enough?”

And God said, “Yes, Gideon, that’s the perfect size army.”

Why did God want such a small army? Because God was going to make sure that everybody knew that Israel did not win this battle; God won this battle. If they had a big army, Israel might forget that it was God who brought the victory. But with only 300 men, there would be no doubt that God was responsible for the victory.

You know, kids, there is only one way that your life is going to be a great life, and that is if God fights your battles for you. You can’t make it on your own. You can’t win your own battles. You must have God fighting for you. And sometimes it will seem like you are so outnumbered that there is no way you can win. But just remember that, as long as God is on your team, you are never outnumbered.

God said, “Gideon, make sure every man has three things: one light, one pitcher, and one trumpet.” So Gideon told every man to get a light, a pitcher, and a trumpet. Then God said, “In the middle of the night, I want you to run down on the thousands and thousands of Midianites, carrying your lights inside of your pitchers. All at once, blow the trumpets, break the pitchers, and yell, ‘*The sword of the Lord and of Gideon.*’ Then, I will win the battle for you.”

It sounded like a crazy plan, but Gideon knew that it was God’s plan. Doing things God’s way may seem silly to you sometimes, but do whatever God says so that God will be fighting your battles.

The middle of the night came, and Gideon and his men made a circle around the camp. Gideon had told his men, “Watch for my signal, and then blow the trumpet and break the pitcher.” All at once, 300 trumpets sounded, 300 pitchers broke, 300 lights shone brightly, and 300 men shouted, “The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon!” Then Midianite men woke up scared to death! They did not know what was happening. They thought that they were being attacked by an army of thousands. They started to fight and kill their own men! Those who survived were running for their lives in the darkness. Gideon and his man chased the Midianites right out of the land of Israel. God had given them a great victory.

How did they win this battle? By doing things God’s way. When you do things God’s way, He will fight your battles for you. And when God fights your battles for you, it does not matter who is fighting against you.

Let’s learn our memory verse: **Psalm 119:105** – *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*

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Judges 6:1-7:25

Teen and Adult Lesson

Year One, Quarter Three, Lesson Ten

[0350]

Teacher, choose one of the following truths to expand upon in teaching this portion of Scripture to your teen/adult class. Teach and apply the truth that you choose using statements and illustrations that are most helpful and applicable to your students.

- I. **GOD SEES OUR POTENTIAL, EVEN WHEN IT ISN'T OBVIOUS TO OTHERS.** 6:11-12. Gideon was threshing wheat in hiding, so the Midianites would not see him. This was not at all an act of boldness. Yet, the angel calls him a “mighty man of valour,” or courage. God saw courage in Gideon, and sent His messenger to spur him to act on his courage. God sees your potential, and He works to help you reach your full potential.

- II. **GOD LIKES IT WHEN WE ASK THE BIG QUESTIONS.** 6:13-14. This was not a question that suddenly occurred to Gideon. He had been wondering, “Where is God?” Now he is given the opportunity to ask the angel in person. God likes it when we ask, as Elisha did, “Where is the Lord God of Elijah?”

- III. **YOU WILL NEVER STAND FOR GOD BEFORE THE WORLD UNTIL YOU STAND FOR GOD AT HOME.** 6:25-32. Before Gideon could defeat the Midianites, he had to defeat the false gods in his own household. He was willing to risk the anger and rejection of his own father; but when he took the right stand, his father followed and respected him. Are you willing to do right, to be spiritual, to take the lead in obeying God in your own house?

- IV. **GOD CAN DO GREAT THINGS THROUGH A SMALL GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO ARE WILLING TO FOLLOW HIM WITH THEIR WHOLE HEART.** 7:1-8. God was not concerned with having “enough” soldiers. In fact, God did not want to have too large a group. God has no lack, but He insists on using people who are fully yielded to Him.

- V. **WHEN WE ARE OBEDIENT, THE VICTORY IS WON BEFORE THE BATTLE BEGINS.** 7:9. God told Gideon before the attack ever began that the enemy was already his. God requires obedience. When we are obedient, the victory is won.

GIDEON

Judges 6-7

[0350]

God Uses the Weak to Defeat the Strong

I. God Calls Gideon to Fight the Midianites *Chapter 6*

1-10 God sends a prophet to Israel in answer to their prayers *vs 7-8*

11-24 An angel of the LORD calls Gideon to fight for Him *vs 12-14*

25-32 Gideon breaks down his father's altar to false gods *vs 28-29*

33-35 Gideon send out a call to form an army *vs 34*

36-40 Gideon asks God for confirmation *vs 36*

II. God Leads Gideon and His Army to Victory *Chapter 7*

1-8 God cuts Gideon's army down to 300 men *vs 7*

9-15 God uses the dream of an enemy to give Gideon confirmation *vs 13-15*

16-25 God uses Gideon's small army to defeat Israel's enemies *vs 20-22*

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

Psalm 119:105

Gideon

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[0350]

Search the puzzle below to find the ten words in the wordlist from today's story. Words may be vertical, horizontal, or diagonal. Circle each word that you find.

A R M O P T R U M P E T
R I M I G D V M P I I V
V R G I D E O N E O S R
I P T C H I T R A E R O
C H M C I V A M G V A U
T H R E E H U N D R E D
O A R G O T R M I N L I
R G I L D E T A V T O H
Y V M I T G I R M P E M
M A N G E L T M V G E S
A G E H A N G Y P E C E
V P I T C H E R T R O U

WORDLIST:

ISRAEL	THREE HUNDRED
MIDIANITES	LIGHT
ANGEL	PITCHER
GIDEON	TRUMPET
ARMY	VICTORY

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The answers to today's puzzle

A	R	M	O	P	T	R	U	M	P	E	T
R	I	M	I	G	D	V	M	P	I	I	V
V	R	G	I	D	E	O	N	E	O	S	R
I	P	T	C	H	I	T	R	A	E	R	O
C	H	M	C	I	V	A	M	G	V	A	U
T	H	R	E	E	H	U	N	D	R	E	D
O	A	R	G	O	T	R	M	I	N	L	I
R	G	I	L	D	E	T	A	V	T	O	H
Y	V	M	I	T	G	I	R	M	P	E	M
M	A	N	G	E	L	T	M	V	G	E	S
A	G	E	H	A	N	G	Y	P	E	C	E
V	P	I	T	C	H	E	R	T	R	O	U

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