Times of the Judges

TIMID FAITH

Thursday, November 12

Reading: Judges 6-7

> ***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.* ***4*** *But the LORD said to Gideon, "There are still too many men…*

The first words of the angel of the Lord to Gideon are very ironic. "The Lord is with you, mighty warrior." Gideon is far from a mighty warrior. The angel finds him threshing his wheat in hiding so it won't be stolen by the Midianites. Gideon complains that he is the most insignificant member of a weak family in his clan. He also wonders where God has been since there have been no great deliverances like he has heard told around the family fire. How could God possible use him?!

But God sees Gideon as he could be if he allowed God's Spirit to work through him. After realizing who his visitor is, Gideon is afraid. God then commands him to destroy his father's idols. Gideon obeys but does so secretly at night. His lack of courage is seen further by his requests concerning the fleece. Even after the direct command of God, Gideon still wants further proof that he is God's man.

Once Gideon assembles the army, he has 32,000 men to face the enemy army of at least 135,000 (see Judges 8:10). While Gideon may have thought this army had a fighting chance, God informed him that it was too big. The Lord wanted there to be no doubt who won this battle. After a couple of army reductions, Gideon is left with 300 men!

God gives Gideon one more assurance by allowing him to overhear the dream of one of the enemy soldiers that confirmed God's presence with Gideon. With his 300 men armed with swords, pitchers, torches, and trumpets, Gideon surrounds the enemy camp at night. God causes the torch light and trumpet blasts to so confuse the Midianites that they start killing each other and flee their camp leaving everything behind.

LESSON ONE: God knows our frailties. But He also sees what we could become if we allow Him to control our lives. Gideon was afraid but he still did what God commanded. How have you seen God do great things in your life? Are there fears or insecurities that you still need God's help to conquer?

LESSON TWO: "Putting out the fleece" is not a sign of faith, but of insecurity and doubt. Sometimes we question God and want Him to prove Himself to us when He has already given us His Word and His Spirit. Thankfully, God is gracious and often answers our doubts and strengthens our faith. Have you ever doubted God's call on your life? How did you respond to this doubt? How did God respond?

LESSON THREE: Satan often attacks hardest after a great spiritual victory. After the victory, Gideon led his people to defeat by making a golden ephod that the people end up worshipping. After his death, the sons of his many wives and concubines lead the nation into civil war and Gideon's family is destroyed (Judges 8-9). How do you deal with Satan's temptations after a spiritual high in your life?