



Midweek Study Notes

30th January 2022

Prepared by Matt

Giants of Faith - Gideon

Before starting this week's notes, pray that God will *challenge, refresh, renew and encourage* us as we study His word.

On Sunday we continued our look at the Giants of Faith listed in Hebrews 11 by focussing on the story of Gideon, which can be found in Judges chapters 6 and 7.



Mark introduced us to a man who was scared stiff and fearful. Gideon secretly threshed grain during the middle of the night to avoid the oppressive glare of the Midianites, who had made a habit of invading the Israelites' land *'like swarms of locusts'* whenever they planted crops. This had impoverished the Israelites so much *'that they cried out to the Lord for help,'* and God heard and acted upon their prayers.

As **Judges 6: 11-12** tells us, *'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. When the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, he said, "The Lord is with you, mighty warrior."*

Gideon was living in fear, had many doubts along the way and even tried to tell God what to do. So why does the Bible list him amongst the other giants of faith in Hebrews 11? Why did the angel of the Lord describe him as a *mighty warrior*?

Because, as we are told in **Judges 6: 14-16**, Gideon carried out his upcoming mission in God's strength, not his own, with God telling him in verse 16, *"I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites, leaving none alive."*

Our journey of faith often begins when we're at a place where our needs outstrip our resources. Gideon went on a faith journey with God which meant that, even in the face of seemingly impossible odds, he was able to rid the land of invaders and usher in 40 years of peace. When we are panic stricken with fear about a situation, faith is gone, but when we face a situation with faith, fear is gone. *And as we trust in God, and as our faith increases, He takes us from weak to strong.*

Discussion Suggestions

Can you give an example of an occasion when God increased your faith? What effect did this increase in faith have on your Christian journey?

Read **2 Corinthians 12:9-10**, which explains that God can work powerfully through our weaknesses, just like he did with Gideon.

Does God really expect us to rejoice when we are insulted, persecuted or are going through difficult times?

Do you think it is acceptable for you and your fellow Christians to boast about your weaknesses? Is it not better to focus on our *positive* actions and characteristics?

Kathryn introduced us to the concept of 'should-ing,' where we plant our weaknesses in condemnation by saying things like "I should be feeling happy" or "I should not be looking at that". She said that when we focus on the 'shoulds' we become imprisoned by condemnation.

Can you think of any 'shoulds' that you have planted? How could having a less negative view of your weaknesses make a positive difference in your life?

This week we have focussed on Gideon's journey from fear to faith, but there are many examples in the Bible of people going on an amazing faith journey.

Which biblical character's journey encourages you the most, and why?



Prayer Suggestion

Kathryn reminded us that "**I am deeply loved by God,**" and asked us to make that declaration for ourselves, as well as for other people. Spend a few minutes focussing on those words, and pray for someone you care about who needs to know and understand God's amazing love for them.