

Judges 7:1-8 – God’s glory comes by many or by few

TSK, HebrewLexicon, Henry, Handfuls, Poole, Pulpit, Trapp, JFB, Delitzsch, Gill, Maclaren, Geneva, Barnes, Expositor?

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ: God is pleased to bring about his glory in whatever way he chooses – whatever way pleases him. Today you will see how God was pleased to bring glory to himself through a few faithful followers.

Our headings are:

God Desired to Preserve his Glory

God Devised a means to Preserve his Glory

Our goals are: **That you will learn to be faithful in order to be used by God to advance his kingdom’s cause, and so bring glory to him.**

God Desired to Preserve his Glory

1 Then Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) and all the people who were with him rose early and encamped beside the well of Harod, so that the camp of the Midianites was on the north side of them by the hill of Moreh in the valley.

1. Joash, Gideon’s father, came back to his spiritual senses. He realized the hopelessness of serving an idol that could do nothing; it couldn’t help itself. In showing that he had really come back to serving the Lord, he renamed his son Gideon, Jerubbaal. Jerubbaal meant “let Baal plead for himself.”

Integrated in Gideon’s new name were

a. The hopelessness of idols – as they couldn’t plead for themselves

b. The power of Jehovah – who challenged idolaters to see if he couldn’t plead for himself.

With the help of his father, and with a new name, Gideon then became the antagonist对抗 to Baal and his worshippers and the protagonist领导者 to Israel’s good and his glory.

2. Aren’t you too given a new name through Jesus Christ and aren’t you too ably supported by your Father to fight against principalities and powers and rulers of darkness and spiritual wickedness in high places? And wouldn’t the conquering of the nations, either by submitting to the Lord, or by their condemnation to hell, bring glory to your God? This is your task, brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ!

3. In the 1st step to securing God’s glory, Gideon called his nation to fight the marauding掠夺 enemies of Israel: Midian, Amalekites, and Arabians. An observer you would not have put much hope for Israel. Israel was small in number, but their enemies were large in number and their tents dotted the landscape. Israel was unskilled in battle, but the enemies were battle hardened. Israel had little food. The enemies had much of Israel’s food. So the visual said a lot!

2 And the LORD said to Gideon, "The people who are with you are too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel claim glory for itself against Me, saying, ‘My own hand has saved me.’

4. To the one without faith, God’s next words to Gideon were inexplicable可解释, considering how few Israel was, how unskilled they were in battle, and how little food they had. God told him he had too many soldiers.

5. Why would God say that he had too many soldiers?

God knew that they would take credit for what he would do. So God wanted to preserve the honor for himself.

This is man’s perennial长期 problem. He wants to take credit for what God does. Trapp said that the soul is bladder-like and is often filled with the wind of vain glory and it grows great and swells in pride.

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, **lest anyone should boast.**

But God wanted to rightly keep the honor for himself.

Zerachiah 4:6 So he answered and said to me: "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: ‘Not by might nor by power, **but by My Spirit,’ Says the LORD of hosts.**

Isaiah 40:28 Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, The Creator of the ends of the earth, Neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable.

29 **He gives power to the weak,** And to **those who have no might He increases strength.**

But keep in mind that God was not against using many, but he wanted to make sure that they were humble.

1Samuel 14:6 Then Jonathan said to the young man who bore his armor, "Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised我们到过这些未受割礼的人的驻军那里去; it may be that the LORD will work for us. **For nothing restrains the LORD from saving by many or by few.**"

Because God knew the condition of the hearts of his people in Gideon's day, he chose to save by few.

6. God's deliverance by many, or few applies to you today in physical or spiritual things, just as God used 12 disciples to turn the world upside down, and how he used David to save Israel from Goliath.

God may use doctors to heal you, or he might heal you directly.

God might use your own reading of the Bible to become a Christian or he might use many to bring the Gospel to you.

God might save the country through 1 skilled diplomat 外交官, or he might use the whole army, if he were so inclined.

God might use a few at New Horizon to save many in Toronto.

Do you believe he can? It is not about you. It is **about the grace of God to you and the glory which goes to God.**

This should be your motto 动力. **"Grace to me; glory to God!"**

God Devised 设计 means to Preserve his Glory

3 "Now therefore, proclaim in the hearing of the people, saying, **'Whoever is fearful and afraid,** let him turn and depart at once from Mount Gilead.'" And twenty-two thousand of the people returned, and ten thousand remained.

1. So how did God reduce the number of Israel's soldiers? The Lord told Gideon to send home all those who were

afraid to fight the battle-hardened Midianites. Maybe some were afraid of losing their family, friends, homes, and animals. Others probably saw the enemies looked like grasshoppers, as there were about 120,000 enemy soldiers plus an additional 15,000 in outside help. Maybe they were afraid because they didn't have the skill to fight.

Ultimately, Israel was afraid because they had forgotten their covenant God and what he had done for them.

Their faith was weak. Faith and fear are enemies. Their faith was weak because they **had forgotten God's Word.**

Deuteronomy 7:17 "If you should say in your heart, 'These nations are greater than I; how can I dispossess them?' —18 **"you shall not be afraid of them,** but you shall remember well what the LORD your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt: 19 "the great trials which your eyes saw, the signs and the wonders, the mighty hand and the outstretched arm, by which the LORD your God brought you out. So shall the LORD your God do to all the peoples of whom you are afraid.

God knew that fear was contagious 传染 and that caused it to hurt others around.

Deuteronomy 20:8 "The officers shall speak further to the people, and say, 'What man *is there who is* fearful and fainthearted? Let him go and return to his house, lest the heart of his brethren faint like his heart.'

Of the 32,000 there, 10,000 remained. Twenty-two thousand were afraid.

2. Are you afraid to be used by God? Do you think it is too difficult to take the Gospel to someone, maybe to a co-worker?

God cannot use you if you are afraid. Further, what ground do you have to be afraid? Remember how God saved you from hell! He did not give you a spirit of fear! Fear disappears when faith comes. Faith comes by remembering and believing God's Word. If the challenge is to battle for God's glory with the Gospel, would you be in the 22,000 or the 10,000?

4 But the LORD said to Gideon, "The people are still too many; bring them down to the water, and I will **test them** for you there. Then it will be, that of whom I say to you, 'This one shall go with you,' the same shall go with you; and of whomever I say to you, 'This one shall not go with you,' the same shall not go." 5 So he brought the people down to the water. And the LORD said to Gideon, **"Everyone who laps 舔 from the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall set apart by himself;** likewise everyone who gets down on his knees to drink." 6 And the number of those who lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, was three hundred men; but all the rest of the people got down on their knees to drink water.

3. But Lord told Gideon that the 10,000 remaining was too much and he had to bring that number lower. If the number wasn't lower, the people might still take credit for what God did and so rob God of his glory. So God used another winnowing method - a test- to shift out more soldiers. God used the word "test." **This word means to "smelt 冶炼"** like is done to metals to remove impurities. And that is the context of what God did next. He intended to eradicate 根除 the weak.

4. The "smelting" was done this way: Gideon had to take the thirsty, hot, soldiers to the water and observe their drinking. If **a soldier knelt down and bent over directly to drink,** he was separated from the one who took water and **stood up to drink it from his hand.** So 9700 bent down on their knees and directly drank from the water, but 300 took water up with their hands and were careful to drink. The 9,700 were sent home.

7 Then the LORD said to Gideon, "By the three hundred men who lapped I will save you, and deliver the Midianites into your hand. Let all the other people go, every man to his place."

5. In this testing God showed even though the 9,700 soldiers of the 10,000 remaining soldiers were not afraid, yet they were not equipped for battle. With the Midianites nearby, they endangered themselves and their fellow soldiers by their cravings which showed in their careless and selfish act. They had less sense of security. On the other hand, the 300 who stood up and lapped water from their hands showed a degree of self-denial and patience.

6. You are not fit for service –to work for God’s glory- if your comfort and personal indulgence 放纵 is your chief concern. It is when you control your desires you will be more useful to the kingdom. You see, someone cannot rely on you for instruction, for advice, or assistance if you put your needs first. You would not care if you were late for a meeting. You would change your mind about helping if something better comes up. It is like having an invitation to a wedding of an acquaintance and you accept it...but then someone else more popular then gives you an invitation to their wedding, and then you break your work and chose the popular person’s wedding. The selfish person chooses what is best for him rather than what is for God’s glory. So God reject that person and has no need of him.
Yet, the quality of God’s work is not affected by the number of the people on the job.
The “liquor is not less when the froth is blown off.”
The blowing away of the rotten figs 腐烂无花果 will not hinder the growth of the tree.

8 So the people took provisions and their trumpets in their hands. And he sent away all the rest of Israel, every man to his tent, and retained those three hundred men. Now the camp of Midian was below him in the valley.

7. God then chose the 300 hundred men to do his work, but when you see the weapons that God chose, it will make your mouth drop!

8. This was a lesson in humility 谦卑. God doesn’t need you. God equips you. He gave you his Word and Spirit. Through them you get faith. **This is a lesson in the need to be prepared** so that you can be fit for the Savior’s use and bring glory to him.

Conclusion:

God desired his honor for the work he was going to do through Gideon. God devised the details of the work so Israel will bring honor to him.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. God is sometimes pleased to use you and sometimes he will work without you. He works by many or by few. This is humbling. This kills boastfulness.

2. God works with those who are prepared ...children who have strong faith, no fear, and who desire his glory.

3. God prepares you with strength, knowledge, and courage to do the task he has for you. You cannot be successful in your life fighting against rulers of darkness and children of the Devil if you are afraid or unprepared.

4. Let God prepare you with his Word and Spirit and strengthen your faith. Don’t trust your own skills or you will be shamed. To fight without faith will cause you to give up as soon as there is opposition. But if you are prepared...strong in faith...and you instinctively 本能 trust him... knowing he is your Lord and Savior, you will fight and bring glory to the Savior.

Finally, if you are not a Christian, you are bound for the same end as the Midianites under God’s heavy judgment. But if you call to him for forgiveness...calling with a heart that has a sense of your sins...he will hear you and save you through Jesus Christ taking the punishment for the sins of the world.