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Gideon's Mighty Army

Judges 7:1-8

Prayer: *Father God, we just again thank you that above all else we can trust in you. Thank you for being the God who you are. Thank you for giving us the gift of your Son and the gift of your word and gift of your Holy Spirit. And Lord, this morning we want to avail ourselves of those gifts. We want to pray for the presence of your Holy Spirit as we open up the gift of your word. Lord, accompany us, guide us, open our hearts, our minds, our eyes and our ears as we open your book and again make it of lasting value, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Well, we've been following the story of Gideon, that mighty man of valor, and he's put out his fleece before God. The Midianites are now 135,000 strong and they're massing on the plain of Megiddo. Every time, every year around harvest time they would appear to attack Israel and once again strip them of every single resource that they had, but this time, this time it was going to be different. Gideon had met the angel of the Lord, a pre-incarnate vision of Christ himself, and Christ was going to send Gideon into

battle. We pick it up at *Judges 6:34*. It says: *But the Spirit of the LORD clothed Gideon, and he sounded the trumpet, and the Abiezrites were called out to follow him. And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh, and they too were called out to follow him. And he sent messengers to Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, and they went up to meet them.* Well, Gideon manages to gather an Army of 32,000 which is an enormously significant amount but no match whatsoever for the Midianites. So he asks God to give him a sign that he really should go to war against such a huge enemy. He puts out a sheep's fleece and he asks God to make the ground around it dry and the fleece wet. And God does just that. Gideon then reverses himself and he asks God for one more additional sign, could you please make the ground wet and the fleece dry. Well once again God accommodates Gideon's need for a sign and he does just that. And we spoke last time about the idea of signs and wonders and the problems that signs and wonders bring about. And the problem is no matter how significant those signs are, human beings always have the capacity to second-guess them. Gideon receives three straight miracles before he was finally convinced that God had called him to raise up an army to attack the Midianites, but now God is going to do some work in Gideon's life. Now God is going to exercise Gideon's faith and he's going to do it by cutting down his army. Is this *Judges 7:2*. It says: *The LORD said to Gideon, "The people with you are too many for me to give the*

Midianites into their hand, lest Israel boast over me, saying, 'My own hand has saved me.'"

Now there's a principle at work here and whether it applies to Gideon and his army or whether it applies to you and me, the principle was best stated by Jesus in his reply to Paul. If you remember when Paul was seeking relief from his thorn in the flesh, he prayed and Paul said this, he said: *Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."* Well, Gideon is about to experience exactly what Jesus was referring to and that is weakness as a source of strength. You see you will seldom if ever experience God's power from a position of strength for two reasons. Number one, you're not going to seek God's power in the first place because you're going to think you don't need it if you're in a position of strength; and secondly, God's not about to play second fiddle to anyone. I mean God was not interested here in merely lousy odds of success for Gideon. You know he was outnumbered four to one but those are not insurmountable odds. God wanted there to be no mistaking where the power for this victory was coming from and he does it by subtracting from Gideon's already undersized army. This is verse 3. He says: *"Now therefore proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, 'Whoever is fearful and trembling, let him return home and*

hurry away from Mt. Gilead.'" Then 22,000 of the people returned, and 10,000 remained. You know, it's been said that the very last thing that you want in a fighting man is fear and trembling. Those qualities tend to make for lousy soldiers. And really what Gideon is doing is he's just using a time-honored law that pointed out how dangerous it was to have fearful and trembling men fighting right next to you. This is in *Deuteronomy 20*, it says this, it says: "*And the officers shall speak further to the people, and say, 'Is there any man who is fearful and fainthearted? Let him go back to his house, lest he make the heart of his fellows melt like his own.'*" But then again who wouldn't be fearful facing an enemy that outnumbered you four to one? So Gideon announces anyone who is fearful, anyone desiring to leave can go, and 22,000 terrified soldiers walk away. Suddenly the remaining army now finds itself out numbered 13 to 1. I mean now the odds go from lousy to terrifically lousy. *Judges 7:4*, it says: *And the LORD said to Gideon, "The People are still too many."* God wanted to make absolutely certain that there was no possible way that anyone could attribute Israel's victory over the Midianites to anything other than the power of God. See, those are the kind of odds that free God up to demonstrate his power.

There's almost always an inverse proportion to the amount of personal power we experience and our experience of God. The more

resources, the more ability, the more safety we experience, the less we tend to experience the reality of God. I was really impressed with that when I was in India. It was one thing that actually struck -- actually there was three things, one was the absolute absence of any resources whatsoever that these people had, the other was their utter reliance on God, and the third thing was seeing God's hand so frequently in their lives that it didn't strike them as any big deal. It wasn't a miracle, it was kind of commonplace. I mean they had needs and God just fulfilled those needs, so what's the big deal? I mean I was there, I had needs but I had credit cards, and that's a big difference. Gideon's army had been drastically reduced but there was still this level of possibility of victory that could come from their own resources and God wanted to take away even that possibility.

We pick up at verse 4. God says: *"Take them down to the water, and I will test them for you there, and anyone of whom I say to you, 'This one shall go with you', shall go with you, and anyone of whom I say to you, 'This one shall not go with you,' shall not go."* So he brought the people down to the water. And the LORD said to Gideon, *'Every one who laps the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall set by himself. Likewise, every one who kneels down to drink.'* And the number of those who lapped, putting their hands to their mouths, was 300 men, but all the rest of the people

knelt down to drink water. And the LORD said to Gideon, "With the 300 men who lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hand, and let the others go every man to his own home." So the people took provisions in their hands, and their trumpets. And he sent all the rest of Israel every man to his tent, but retained the 300 men. And the camp of Midian was below him in the valley.

This is weird, I mean, this is just weird. You know, a lot of commentators have tried to figure out the significance of this test that God has established to pick out these 300 and probably the best explanation I've seen is that -- is the suggestion that those who lapped were those who drank by getting right down on to the ground, getting flat out on their chest so they wouldn't be presenting any kind of target while they drank. It's a much more difficult way of consuming refreshments but it makes an attack almost impossible. Meanwhile those who just knelt down and drank would have presented an ideal target to the enemy. And it could be argued that these were people who put personal comfort above their conduct first and foremost as soldiers. Those who lapped like a dog were staying true to their calling as soldiers in spite of their thirst, and those are the ones that were going to make up Gideon's army. I mean they had to be the very best when it came to soldiering because any group of 300 preparing to take on 135,000 would have to be extraordinary or suicidal or both, and what had to be certain is that any victory that's going to come out of this, it

had to belong to God alone.

But now the question looms. What does this have to do with us? I mean, how does an ancient battle that was fought millennia ago speak to us today in the 21st century? Well you know, I make the case and I say it over and over and over again that we are at war. I say it all the time. We are engaged in a proxy war between two great super powers, the forces of light and the forces of darkness, and we humans, us, we're right in the middle. I mean we may not be a physical army facing a physical army and a physical enemy, but God has much to say here through Gideon about how we as individuals and as a church are to fight the fight that God has carved out for us. I mean we can all see the extreme measures that God employs to strip Gideon and his army of 32,000 of any and all reliance on a natural means to fight what is essentially a natural battle. It's not quite as easy to see but that is precisely what God wants to do with us and with his church as it fights what is essentially a supernatural battle.

Let me ask you specifically: Have you ever had a miracle like Gideon's had in your own life? I mean have you ever been in a situation where the odds of victory are just as dramatically set against you as they were against Gideon, where the possibility of victory seemed even less than remote and you knew without a doubt

that if victory ever came, it could only be because God himself had miraculously intervened? I've been blessed, I mean, I could point to probably a half dozen times in my life when God miraculously intervened. I've told you many, many of those stories. I can tell you the story of the septic tank, the story of how we got our second or third car, the birth of my twin boys at two plus pounds, my granddaughter Leah. I could go on and on about the things that God has done personally in my life and I can say this much about the times that God has miraculously intervened in my life: They're very similar to Gideon's life in one respect. In each case the odds of success were next to impossible. God had so arranged things that I knew without a doubt that any possible success had to come from him and not me and not my resources. I mean that also required circumstances again that were just like Gideon's in which I found myself completely and utterly powerless to do anything. And again, these are not circumstances that I chose. These were circumstances that life had thrust upon me without ever asking my permission. And that, that was a blessing from God. I was blessed in that God did not give me the option of being completely powerless because I absolutely wouldn't have taken it. He simply put me in a place without ever asking my permission, not that God ever asks or needs to ask permission of anyone. But the one thing that I learned about God's miraculous intervention is that just as with Gideon, it seldom takes place in a situation or circumstance

that leaves you guessing as to whether it was your input or God's that made the difference. Trust me, God is not going to share top billing with anyone. And his words to Gideon were quite explicit. It says: *The LORD said to Gideon, "The people with you are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hand, lest Israel boast over me, saying, 'My own hand has saved me.'"* So why would we think that God would treat us any differently? If you want to see God do miraculous things in your life, you will probably be in a position of complete and absolute powerlessness where you are so fully dependent on God's intervention that no one is ever going to mistake your success as coming from your hands. I mean just think back to all of the miracles we read about in scripture, think about the patriarchs, think about Abraham and Moses and Joseph and Elijah, each of the recipients of those miracles, they had no fallback. They had no plan B if things didn't work out. I mean it was either God's miraculous intervention or it was a complete and utter disaster. Just imagine Elijah and he's up there on Mount Carmel and he's there with his altar and his sacrificial bull and they're all set and they're soaked and they're waiting for God's direct intervention and what would happen if nothing happened? You know, when God miraculously intervened by consuming that soaked up sacrifice, there's no doubt whatsoever that it wasn't some kind of trick that Elijah had up his sleeve but the direct intervention of a miraculous God. I mean imagine Moses, imagine Moses in the court

of Pharaoh telling him that the plague that he had just predicted, somehow or other it just didn't work out or didn't materialize, or Joseph predicting a seven-year famine that never happened. In each of these cases God's miracles addressed the situation that had no fallback. There was no plan B. It was either God's direct intervention or it was a complete and utter disaster. And those who were seeking a miracle had absolutely no one but God to count on. Well, such was the case with Gideon. See, we seldom see God do miraculous things in our culture because we seldom find ourselves in a position of powerlessness. I mean after all, this is the United States, this is the place with cradle-to-grave security. We get to live lives that ensure us from the day of our birth to the day of our death we have no problem with calamities like the rest of the world has. And you know, God tells us that all good things come from his hand and we believe that every good and perfect gift does come down from above but the net effect of living with the abundance that we are used to in the United States is that we seldom find ourselves like Gideon, reduced to an intervention by God or absolute chaos and destruction. But I know in a body of this size at any given time, some of us are going to find ourselves in that place through no choice of our own. God may have gifted us with circumstances that are way beyond our ability to control and you may find yourself forced to rely on his miraculous power alone. Trust me, I know what that's like. I mean

I've been there and done that, and I know what it's like to desperately wish to get out from under it. But I also know that it is times like this when you find yourself in the middle of a crucible that God becomes more real than he's ever been. And if this is your case, trust that God knows all about your circumstances in the exact same way that he knew all about Gideon's. Trust also that God will surround and support you and will walk you through whatever it is you are facing. I've said it before, it's not for nothing that God says in *Psalm 23*: *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.* That's God's promise to every single one of us and his promise has always been to walk us through, not around, not above, not below but through anything that we can face, knowing that he is with us.

But what if we never seem to find a God like Gideon encountered? How do we find that God that Gideon found? How do we increase our chances of sensing God's miraculous intervention? Well, the answer is by putting ourselves in the same type of position of powerlessness that Gideon found himself in. And you know there is something miraculous that each and every one of us can do that has odds that are just as impossible as anything that Gideon faced; in fact the odds are even worse. If God doesn't intervene in this

particular activity then there's no hope whatsoever of a good outcome and it's something that you and I can do regardless of whatever country or culture we are in. And if God does intervene, if he decides yes, then you have participated in one of the greatest miracles there is.

Let me explain to you how this miracle works by telling you a little bit about Patricia. Patricia is passionate about her faith, she's passionate about her relationship with Jesus Christ, and she's passionate about putting her faith into action. I just saw a posting that she had made on Facebook about a mission trip she had taken to the Philippines and how much joy she had had at being able to share the gospel overseas. I first met Patricia in 1975. That must seem like -- 1975, I wasn't even born then. I'm sure many of you are thinking that. But she had been a roommate of a dear friend of ours who had recently come to Christ and this friend of ours wanted to bring her over to introduce us to her. And she was pleasant enough but she wanted to let us know, she was in college, we were all in our 20s at that time, she wanted to let us know right from the start that she was a psych major who felt that anyone who needed the crutch of religion was pitifully weak. She was firmly committed to an atheistic worldview that in her mind gave her the freedom to pursue a pretty wild life-style that she was living. Well, it turns out that her love of that life-style

was just an empty cover-up for an empty life. And I had the privilege of sharing the gospel with her. Now Gideon's odds against the Midianites were far, far better than any earthly odds of my breaking through the strongholds that she had taken years to build. And at first she was deeply resentful. Then she started to grow interested. And then she had lots of questions. And then she gave her life to Jesus Christ. I got to see a miracle. I got to see a person transformed. I got to see somebody go from the kingdom of darkness into God's marvelous light. I got to actually see worked out what it is Peter said in *1 Peter 2:9*, he says: *But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*

I met Patricia when I was living in California. I left California in 1978, been in Port Jervis ever since. I mean it's been over 40 years since we've had those conversations, 40 years since God did a miraculous thing in Patricia's life. And guess what? God gave me the privilege of being part of that. And just like Gideon, I had a part to play. Now every time I see Patricia posting something about her walk with Christ, I think of where she was when I first met her and I think of where she was headed. And I absolutely

marvel that God enabled me to participate in helping call someone out of darkness into his marvelous light. I'll never forget the first day I realized that someone I had shared the gospel with had actually gone from that darkness into the light and I remember thinking to myself, I remember thinking if I never did another thing for the rest of my life, I mean, if I went on from here to become some kind of a skid row bum, the fact that I had this tiny part in bringing somebody literally from death to life eternally from darkness to light, that made my life worthwhile no matter what direction it was going to go in. And I thought that way, way back in 1975. Now it's some 43 years later, and I still have the intense pleasure and joy of participating in that miracle.

Now if I were to compare Patricia's victory over the darkness to the chances that Gideon had for a victory over the Midianites, I would say he was far more likely to success militarily than I was to success with her spiritually. You see no one can come to Christ on their own. And we are all born shaking our fists at the very one who has given us life. We're all born with the curse of Adam which renders us incapable of grasping what God has done for us on our own. I mean there's a reason why God says: *For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.* I think back to that time in those conversations I had in 1975, and I think of when I gave

the gospel to Patricia I was convinced that I was getting all of my ducks lined up. I was getting my arguments straight, I was going to have a very logical presentation. I had my little army just like Gideon did. I was hopelessly naive at the time because I thought you could argue someone into the kingdom. You cannot. But here it is we find ourselves just like Gideon, in a place where no human resource can be left to take credit for. It is God who gives people the ability to make sense of the foolishness of the cross. I mean we have the privilege of presenting it but God alone is the one who can make it make sense. Man was born a rebel, alienated from his creator and hopelessly lost without a savior. Jesus Christ lived the perfect life and then he offered that perfect life up for our rebel lives at the cross. And when we by faith accept Christ's perfect life as a substitute for ours, then his righteousness becomes our righteousness and then we can stand before a holy God. Now that in a nutshell is the gospel we've been entrusted with that we have the responsibility of sharing. But this is what spiritual warfare is all about. I mean do you really think a message like that is going to go out unchallenged? We are up against an enemy who is far more ruthless than the Midianites could ever hope to be. Jesus described them this way in *John 10*. He said: "*The thief*" -- that's part of who he is -- "*The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.*" We saw what that enemy's goals

were just this past week. I mean is it any surprise that this young man said he heard demon voices urging him on? I mean do you really think the enemy of our souls, the avowed enemy of the kingdom of God is going to stand by and let the gospel pass unchallenged? I mean I've said it before and I'll say it again, we are at war. Listen to what Jesus said in *Matthew 11*. He said: *"From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force."* The reason why Gideon was going to war with the Midianites is because the enemy wanted to violently wipe out the nation of Israel to preclude God himself from taking on flesh through that nation. Stop the nation of Israel and you can stop God from becoming a man, living out that perfect life and then offering up that life on our behalf. I mean that was the game plan the enemy was executing through the Midianites. The battle that Gideon was part of was a physical one. The battles that we participate in are spiritual, but they're not without violence as well. *2 Corinthians 10* says: *For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.* Well, I want to tell you about one of those weapons.

You know, we spent a great deal of time this past year speaking about the number one weapon that God wants us to use as we fight

the battles he set out for us to fight. I hope you know by now that weapon is prayer. We've recently celebrated our 25th anniversary as a church. I just want to kind of go over again the primary reason why we were able to do that. And I've told people before, there were three keys that we had that were pivotal in us being able to survive as a church for a quarter century. Three specific qualities that we all had who we founded this church that gave us the ability to start and stay afloat all these years. The first was gross incompetence, the second was absolute terror, and the third was directly related to the first two, it was a dedication to prayer. The first quality, gross incompetence, trust me, it's not an attempt at self-deprecating humor, it's much more an accurate description of the people who found themselves in the position of starting a church. I mean almost all of us had no seminary training at all, no knowledge of how a church was supposed to be run or governed, no idea how to put any of whatever ideas we had in place. One of us discovered a John MacArthur book that showed how an Acts style church should be organized and that became our go-to manual. It just happened to be the biblical way. The second part occurred when we actually realized that we were in fact becoming a church. That meant that those of us who were in leadership were going to be held responsible for the spiritual well-being not just of ourselves or our families but a considerable number of other people. We began to feel the weight of *Hebrews 13*

which says: *Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account.* We learned from studying the scripture and from men like John MacArthur that the role that the elders have in church is comprised of four basic areas that are included in Acts 2:42 which says: *They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.* We also learned of the distinction of caring for the physical needs of the church and the role of deacons and the role of elders in caring for the spiritual needs of the church. Most of you have heard of the original dispute that took place in the early church over one -- whether one group or another got preferential treatment and the church then realized that it had some issues to deal with and they recognized the incredible spiritual importance of caring for physical needs. And so they appointed deacons to fulfill that role saving for the elders a very specific role, that role was prayer and proclamation. This is what they said in Acts 6. It says: *Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty.* That was to be deacons. Then it says: *But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.* That's the task given to elders. It was over 25 years ago that we made this realization that the primarily role and purpose for us as elders and leaders was just that, devoting ourselves to prayer and

the ministry of the word. We were pressed into reliance on God by our incompetence and by our fear. Gideon was pressed for essentially the same reasons.

So what does all of this have to do with a battle that was fought three millennia ago by Gideon? Well, the battles today are very different but the primary tactic remains exactly the same. The way for us to advance as individuals and as a church is for God to be the one who is up front getting the glory. The reason why God stripped Gideon of 31,700 soldiers was to make him realize that the only source of victory was going to be God himself. Today by and large I believe the church has lost much of that understanding. Listen to what David Platt writes in his book *Radical*. He says this: "I get fliers on my desk every day advertising entire conferences built around creative communication, first-rate facilities, innovative programs, and entrepreneurial leadership in the church. We Christians are living out the American dream in the context of our communities of faith. We have convinced ourselves that if we can position our resources and organize our strategies, then in church as in every other sphere of life, we can accomplish anything we set our minds to. But what is strangely lacking in the picture of performances, personalities, programs, and professionals is desperation for the power of God. God's power is at best an add-on to our strategies. I am frightened by the reality that the

church I lead can carry on most of our activities smoothly, efficiently, and even successfully, never realizing that the Holy Spirit of God is virtually absent from the picture. We can so easily deceive ourselves, mistaking the presence of physical bodies in a crowd for the existence of spiritual life in a community."

You see, it took us a while to realize that our incompetence and our terror in leading a church when we had no experience whatsoever was in fact an incredible blessing because it drove us to prayer. And we are here today, I can confidently state, only because we recognize that we would never have survived without a concerted prayer effort. And God raised up a unique group of people to help us: Helen Sorensen, Bertha Moore, Jean Warner, Eleanor Maschete along with Sylvia Butsky and Rosie Zaorski. A lot of you folks don't know any of those names at all. They're no longer household names in this church 'cause all of them have gone on to be with the Lord, but believe me they are a huge reason why we are still here. These six older women taught us men the importance of prayer. They put into practice what Paul asked of the early church when he became imprisoned. This is what he said in *Colossians 4: Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison -- that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to*

speak. Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. See, it was they who first took Paul's words to heart, it was they who took to praying through the complete membership of the church on a regular basis, something that we do as elders every month, we got that from them. And let me tell you, praying as we have is still just as countercultural an act today as it was 2,000 years ago. And the reason we speak constantly about the necessity for prayer is that we've seen prayer's results. And if we've learned anything from God's interaction with Gideon, it's that God will not bless those who will not first honor him. I go back to Judges 7: The LORD said to Gideon, "The people with you are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hand, lest Israel boast over me, saying, 'My own hand has saved me.'" The surest way to suggest that our own hands are going to save us is to ignore prayer as being of first importance. Again let me quote David Platt. He says: "When I open the book of Acts in the new Testament and observe the picture of the church there, I see a small band of timid disciples huddled together" -- sounds familiar to me -- "I see a small band of timid disciples huddled together in an upper room. They know they need God's power. They are Galileans, disrespected by the higher classes in Jerusalem as lower-class, rural, uneducated commoners. This is the group that the spread of Christianity depends on. So what are they doing? They are not plotting strategies. They are 'joined together

constantly in prayer.' They are not busy putting their faith in themselves or relying on themselves. They are pleading for the power of God, and they are confident that they are not going to accomplish anything without his provision."

This is not the way much of the contemporary church has been taught to operate. And I can tell you there is constant pressure to make God's power an add-on to our strategies just like David Platt suggests. We just don't like to have to count on God's miraculous power. I'll be the first to admit it, we love to take things into our own hands, and God has no desire to bless that. And it's only when we are wise enough or desperate enough to recognize the importance of giving God the glory and going before him in prayer that he's often then freed up to empower and bless his church. We're going to see next time that Gideon had no choice but to rely on God's miraculous power and God miraculously gave him the victory. And you may be in the same type of situation. You may be in way, way over your head through no choice of your own, and even though you might not be feeling it, God will be just as real a presence as he was with Gideon and he promises to never leave and never forsake you. If life hasn't yet boxed you in like it did with Gideon, you still have the ability to go to war spiritually to experience what Gideon experienced, that's God's presence and power. It involves taking a risk of opening up your eyes, your

ears, and your life to the possibility of sharing the good news with somebody else. You got to understand today that is an act of spiritual warfare, and Jesus has already promised that he's going to bind up the strong man so he can plunder his house, and that's just what we do when we share the gospel in our lives. And don't worry about the chances being stacked against you, they already are the and the odds already are impossible. But impossible means nothing to God. Jesus once said: *"It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God."* When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished, saying, *"Who then can be saved?"* Well that question is precisely what the world wants us to think. It's a question about impossible odds and certain defeat and that's just the kind of mindset the enemy wants us to have. If Gideon thought that way, he never would have undertaken the battle but he did, and we'll learn about that next time.

But for this morning my question is what about you? This isn't about Gideon; this is about you. I have no doubt that there are many other Patricias out there and they're just waiting for someone to throw them a lifeline from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light. I also have no doubt that we've been told over and over again the lie that the disciples took as literal truth, *"Who then can be saved?"* The fact is we are all Gideons called by

the same God into the same battle and the odds are always going to be impossible. But our answer remains: *Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."* Let's pray.

Father, I just again, I thank you for Gideon, I thank you for the example that he is to us. I thank you for the impossibility of the circumstance that he found himself in. And when I ask myself, Lord, what does this battle three millennia ago have to do with us? I just see the same odds, I see the same battle, I see the same tactics, and I pray for each and every one of us, Lord, there's got to be somebody in our life that we are praying for, somebody that we want to reach out to, to hand them a lifeline, somebody that we can be that conduit from darkness to light. I pray you would give us the impetus, the courage, and the wherewithal to do just that. And I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.