

When Defeat Becomes Doctrine

by Carter Conlon

When defeat becomes doctrine, it leads to a powerless church and the pursuit of self, which is a Jezebel spirit, lures people away from the source of true life and power in Christianity.

Duration: 49:58

Scripture: Judges 6:1, Isaiah 1:18, Matthew 16:24, Matthew 26:39, Romans 8:22, 2 Timothy 2:15, Revelation 3:17

Topics: "Defeat"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker passionately addresses the pursuit of self and how it aligns with the heart of Christ. He questions whether the pursuit of self can truly be considered the gospel of Jesus Christ. The speaker refers to Judges 6:1, where the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, as an indictment on any church or church age that claims to be rich and in need of nothing. He emphasizes the importance of understanding God's kingdom and responding to His word.

Transcript

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However for all other forms of reproduction or electronic transmission, existing copyright laws apply. Judges, Chapter 6, please, if you will, in the Old Testament. I have a message this morning that is for Times Square Church, but it's also for the church body, I believe at large.

We have many people who listen to these services now on the Internet and get tapes, videos of throughout the country and other parts of the world. So please be in prayer with me today that God's

kingdom would advance and the kingdom of darkness would suffer great violence. Father, I thank you for the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

I thank you, God, that you will enable me today to preach from the new mind you've given me and the new heart. I thank you for the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. I ask you, Holy Spirit, to quicken this word today, quicken it to my heart.

I ask that there be no part of me involved in this message, that you would animate me, Holy Spirit, that you'd animate my thoughts and mind and heart. And every utterance that concerns this word would come from the very throne of God. Father, I thank you, Lord, that you are building a church in this last hour of time.

Help us to understand your kingdom and give us hearts to respond to your word. We thank you for it in Jesus' name. Judges chapter 6, my message is entitled, When Defeat Becomes Doctrine.

When Defeat Becomes Doctrine. I'm just going to read two verses of scripture, verse 11 and verse 12 to start. There came an angel of the Lord and sat under an oak, which was in Hofra, that pertained to Joash the Abuserite, and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress to hide it from the Midianites.

And the angel of the Lord appeared to him and said unto him, The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor. Now, I want to look for just a moment at the spiritual climate of this season, where God reached down one more time throughout biblical history to raise up a testimony of his glory, his might, his mercy, his power. He raised it up through a man and subsequently others that began to follow and to understand again the kingdom of God.

Of course, we know this man's name was Gideon. He wanted to deliver his people and to show them one more time his mercy. Gideon lived in a home, verse 25 tells us that Gideon's father had built an altar to Baal in his yard as it is, and he had a grove.

And this was a type of a spiritual condition that will always exist when God's people have taken upon themselves the imprint of the nation about them or the nations about them. This has always been the tragedy of God's people throughout history and the tragedy which ultimately leads to a powerless church. When you find the very same spirit, the very same pursuits that are in the hearts of those that are without God, you find those same pursuits in the hearts of those who profess to know him, and especially in the New Testament era, those that profess to know God through Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

When you find a people with the same pursuit, you will find the exact same powerlessness that's in the nation manifesting itself in the church of Jesus Christ. The Holman dictionary, Bible dictionary, defines the grove that Gideon's father had as a shrine to a false goddess called Asherah and who was a fertility goddess. And according to ancient mythology, Asherah was worshipped as the mother of about 70 gods including Baal.

Now, we also know, we've discussed many times in this church that Baal was the god of fertility or increase, was the god that gave increase from the body, gave increase in the field. And the word, the actual noun, Baal, comes from a root word which means to be ruled over or to rule over. Now, if I can put that in simple terms, the people of God were being ruled over by the same obsessions of sensuality and personal increase in prosperity that were in the nations all about them.

Incredible thing, when that begins to happen to God's people, of course, it leads to a total powerlessness. The theology that had developed among at least Gideon's circle in those days consisted of stories of past miracles. You'll see that in verse 13 when the Lord said to him, I've called you in verse 12.

He said, the Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor. And Gideon said to him, oh my Lord, if the Lord be with us, then why has all this befallen us? And where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of saying, did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt? Now the Lord has forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites. Now, this is the tragedy of a backslidden church age.

All of Bible history is still being expounded. It can be expounded from pulpits in churches across the nation. It can be expounded, the stories of all the miracles and everything that Christ has done.

And yet, there's no sense of that same power being able to deliver the present generation. And empower those who are found in this present condition of being swallowed and overwhelmed by their enemies. Beloved, listen to me.

It is never the intent of Christ that the church, his church, be swallowed or overpowered by her enemies. What an incredibly poor testimony that is in any generation of the God who sits at the right hand of all power to have his people in bondage. It is no testimony at all.

There's a lot of talk of revival in many sectors of the church today. But I tell you, where there's no freedom, there's no genuine revival. When there's a genuine revival, the entire pursuit of the heart begins to change.

Personal agendas begin to fall away. A brand new altar is now built. And it's now the pursuit of Christ and the pursuit of Christ's kingdom.

And the pursuit of the very objectives that were in the heart of God when he became a man and died on Calvary. Now begins to be manifested in his church. I've shared with you so many times before that when that happens, hell begins to tremble.

When the least of the least of God's people rises up and begins to say, Enough of the gods of this nation. Enough of powerless pursuit. I'm going to stand up and in the grace of God be counted for the kingdom of God.

God will never fail that kind of a heart. You watch the chains break. The prison doors open.

The wounds of the past begin to be healed. You watch the miraculous begin to open before you. I'm sure that just as today there were theories and human strategies being developed among the people of God to combat their own plight and their powerlessness.

And I'm sure the theories were abounding. Paul, the apostle, warned the early church. He warned Timothy, his young disciple.

And he said the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine. But after their own lusts. In other words, after that which is in their own heart.

What they think their life should be. What humanity without God thinks will bring satisfaction. They will heap to themselves teachers.

There will be a pile of them in the last days, Paul says. They'll be abounding. They'll be on the Internet.

They'll be on the television. Teachers of the lust of the human heart. Will permeate the church of Jesus Christ.

And ruin the testimony of God and his people. And bring the church into powerlessness. The same powerlessness that's found in the nation.

Will be upon the house of God. They have itching ears. They don't want to hear what God is speaking.

Because of the blindness and the stubbornness of the human condition. Something in the inner man says, I know a better way to happiness. A better way to power and prosperity.

Than the one that God revealed to me on Calvary. And they shall turn away their ears from the truth. And shall be turned to fables.

Now fables is muthos, I believe, in the original Greek. And it means stories. Not necessarily false stories.

But nevertheless stories that have no power. It really refers to theories. Theories of freedom.

Theories of how we can overcome the Midianites. Theories of how we can store green. And not have it stolen away from us.

Theories about how to have a better marriage. Or raise your children. Theories that come from just the human mind.

The theology of success and self and prosperity is always. Always. The theology of a spiritually defeated people.

That is the theology of a defeated people. When the testimony of Christ leaves the church. You will find human testimony now beginning to take over.

And the human heart always lusts for the elevation of self. That's the original sin as we call it in the Garden of Eden. If I partake of this I'll be just like God.

I'll be able to determine my own destiny. You ever heard that preached? Persevere to my purpose. And all the rest of these foolish rhyming words that say nothing for God.

This theology is the theology of a defeated church age. And it is now abounding. The altar of Baal is in many homes today.

You heard a powerful warning last Sunday. One of the churches of Revelation had allowed the spirit of Jezebel. Which is a fear based spirit.

And allowed this spirit to come in and influence the churches. Jezebel is defined as that spirit that causes people to eat things that are offered to idols. And indulge in immorality without consequence.

Calls people to indulge in that which causes nations to perish. And has proved conclusively through biblical history that it leads the people of God into defeat. That spirit of Jezebel.

I believe that Christ has a controversy with much of the modern day church. Because Jezebel is on television. Yes, you come to Times Square Church.

Now I'm speaking to Times Square Church now alone. You come to this church and you hear the word of God. And many of you acknowledge it's truth.

You know it touches your heart. And there's an inner witness of the Holy Ghost when you're hearing the truth. That it's the truth.

And you agree with it. Remember one of the Old Testament prophets was in such dismay. Because the Holy Spirit told him.

He said they come and they listen to your words. And you're like a sweet song to them. They love to hear it but they won't do it.

And folks I hate secular television. And I agree with every time you hear that we should be turning off these soap operas. And all these other things that are on television today.

But there's something that I feel is much more insidious. Will do much more harm to your soul than any of these things. And it's the modern day gospel of self success and prosperity.

It's a Jezebel spirit. Luring the people of God away from where the source of true life and power in Christianity really is. Creating a passionless people.

The only passion they have is for themselves. They will fly from country to country. And spend innumerable amounts of money on self betterment.

Self improvement. One new touch. One new zap from God.

But won't spend five cents on the poor throughout the world. Laodicea. Christ warned this last church in Revelation.

He said you have a testimony. You say I'm rich and increased with goods. And I have need of nothing.

But you don't understand your spiritual condition. He said I'm going to cease. I will spew you out of my mouth.

He said I'm going to cease to confess you as my people. It's an incredible indictment. On any church or church age.

You say that you're rich and increased with goods. You have need of nothing. But listen here's a question.

How could this pursuit possibly represent the heart of a yielded Christ. Laying out his all for your benefit and for mine. Tell me this.

You if you are unwise enough. To be turning on television and watching much of modern day so called gospel. Tell me.

Isaiah said let us reason together. Tell me now. How does this represent the Christ that you know.

How does this represent the Christ that said not my will but thine be done. How does it represent the Christ that took a cross and went to a hill. And was crucified.

That you and I can have hope today. Reason it. Reason it.

Then he said if you want to follow me take your cross. That means find the will of God for your life. Find how God will affect his purpose through your life.

To continue on the work of Christ to a perishing generation till he comes and takes us home. Tell me how does the pursuit of self. How does it.

Fit the heart of Christ. And if it doesn't then tell me is it the gospel of Jesus Christ. Or is it another message.

Judges 6 1. The beginning says the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord. Now I want you to understand something I. I am raising my voice without doubt. But I'm not angry.

I'm impassioned. There is a difference. I've seen.

I've seen tens if not hundreds of thousands of people come to Christ in Nigeria. I saw Islam collapse. Before the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I've just come from preaching my own father's funeral. And I saw hunger. In the hearts of people have been.

In religion all their lives without relationship. I'm jealous for the testimony of Jesus Christ in you. I'm jealous for what God.

Has designed you and I to be and what the devil has tried to make the church into. I'm jealous for a people that will finally. In New York City rise up.

And set. The gospel of Jesus Christ is going to be my life. The purpose of Christ for me is going to be the path that I follow.

I'm going to tear down the groves in the altars. Of this society that are trying to make inroads into my heart. And I'm going to find the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Which is the power of God the only power of God. The salvation. They did evil.

In the sight of the Lord and because of it they were delivered for seven years into the hand of an opposing army. The word evil. In the Hebrew means they lived lives of inferior quality.

This is the evil they did. They were morally deficient. They had an improper attitude.

Towards God and man that's the actual definition. They had an improper attitude towards God and man. They didn't really love God with all their heart soul mind and spirit.

And that attitude was reflected in the indifference. Perhaps to the plight of fellow human beings even within their own borders. And God said because of this evil I delivered them into the hand.

Of their enemies. Oh yes I'm sure there was talk of victory. There's always victory prophets in times of theological defeat.

But for seven years. Before God called Gideon. The Bible tells us the people were in hiding.

The hand of Midian chapter 6 verse 2 prevailed against Israel and because of the Midianites. The children of Israel made themselves. Dens in the mountains and caves and strongholds.

So they're all in hiding. And beloved I want to tell you something we today are living in an age of victory talk every time you turn on the television. I don't but if you do.

You're hearing all kinds of talk about victory. But I tell you there's multitudes. In these ranks that are living in hidden sin.

Because there is no I know because there's no power there. There is no power to deliver when you and I are seeking self. When we're seeking for ourselves there is no power there.

The power only comes when we're seeking Christ. His kingdom his righteousness his will. Then he adds to us whatever we need that his testimony might become effective in us.

There is no power there. There was a so-called revival several years ago. In America.

And one of the. Speakers that was involved in that. Said.

That meetings were inundated by lineups of ministers. And their spouses. Who are looking for victory and have never found it.

They were afflicted by pornography. They were in adultery. They were given to unspeakable lust.

Ungodly pursuits. And yet I'm sure most of these were standing and talking victory. Victory outreach and victory this and victory that.

But they themselves were in hiding. Standing in dens and caves. And there are preachers that are going to hear my voice.

On the Internet are going to listen to this message and they're going to hear it on tape. And they know that they're not living in victory. They know there's no power in what they're preaching.

And it must be a living hell to stand in a pulpit and week after week have to preach something that is not a reality. Must be a hell. The dismay.

That's why many of the ministry want to resign. There was a survey taken. I don't know the dates or the organization.

But in that survey. Many ministers who were surveyed said if I could find something else to do I would resign tomorrow. And the reason they're resigning is because the gospel is of no effect in their own lives.

There's no power there. Their pursuit is wrong. There's no seeking of God.

There's no seeking of God's purpose. Now the mercy of God. Chapter 6 again verses 4 to 6. Says the Midianites encamped against him and destroyed the increase of the earth.

Till you come into Gaza and left no substance for Israel. Neither sheep nor ox nor ass. For they came up with their cattle in their tents.

These are the Midianites. They came as grasshoppers for multitude. Both they and their camels were without number.

And they entered into the land to destroy it. And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites. And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord.

You see beloved. It is the mercy of God that will impoverish this present church generation. I want you to know that.

The mercy of God will pull the prosperity rug out. From under his own people. Because there is a season where God will rise and say I will no longer give my glory into the enemy's hand.

I will no longer let thieves and charlatans rule over my people. I will no longer let my testimony be powerless. We see it all through the Bible and thank God I still see it today.

The mercy of God impoverished them. The mercy of God brings down all false security. The mercy of God will shut these voices down in America.

The mercy of God will bankrupt their churches. The mercy of God will make some of them the most hated men in America. Because they have lied to the people.

The Bible says they cried to the Lord. And the cry in Hebrew means to shriek from an imminent sense of danger. The impoverishment came suddenly.

I am sure every man was trying to build up his courage and go out to his altar of prosperity and say well it is only for a season. That things seem to be crumbling but they are going to be okay. The gods of the nation have done well for them and they will also do well for us.

But it became evident after a while that they were being overrun. They were being overpowered. The ministry is being overrun by immorality.

Overrun by a sense of lostness. They get their messages one from another now. And so few hear from God.

The people are starving. The unsaved are hungry for God. We live in a generation where you can bring 1800 teenagers in this church from the inner city and they respond in the hundreds to the gospel.

They are hungry now. But they won't respond to a lie. It is incredible you take an unsaved teenager, turn on the television and they know the fraud that it is.

Who is as blind as my people God cries out. Now God sent a prophet when they cried out. And the prophet sent a warning and he said you have not obeyed my voice and this is why.

I sent a word to you but you didn't want to hear it. I showed you plainly the way. Christ has never been without a testimony.

You can be sure of that. He has been speaking through this whole muddled spiritual search age. He is never without a testimony.

But that prophet came and said you have not obeyed my voice. I have attempted to speak but you didn't want to hear. You wanted success in another way.

You wanted to prosper in another means than what I have provided for you. You had a false altar, a false concept built up around you. But then God speaks again.

And he speaks the way he has always spoken all throughout history. Unarguable. Comes to just a young man who is threshing wheat and hiding it.

He is just as fearful as everyone else around him. But there is something in his heart and God sees it. I will tell you today if there is something in your heart God sees it.

If there is even a little piece of your heart that says God I want to walk in the truth God sees it. And he will speak to it. He will come right to that area of your heart that says Jesus I want you.

And he came again and he said the Lord is with thee. Thou mighty man of valor. Now incredible Gideon backs off and says God is this you? I am.

My family is poor. Isn't that amazing? The altar of Baal had left his family poverty stricken and he knew it. He said my family is poor and I am the least in my father's house.

But God again says the Lord is with you. You mighty man of valor. The word valor in the Hebrew means force, riches, substance or wealth.

God calls him a mighty man of power. A mighty man of wealth and substance. Now obviously that is why Gideon backs away and says what do you mean? We are poor.

But remember the apostle Paul said God quickens the dead in Romans 4.17 and calls those things which be not as though they were. God says I am not calling you what you are. I am calling you what you will be.

You see the voice of the devil will always call you what you are. Of course your own human heart will condemn you. And the Holy Spirit will convince you when you are not what you should be.

But the voice of God doesn't come to Times Square Church in this congregation this morning and say you are an alcoholic and you are this and you are weak and you are ill educated and you are black and you are white and you are red and you are brown. You are this and you are that. That is the enemy's voice.

The voice of God that comes to your heart today calls you something other than what you are. God says I call you what I am going to make you because your heart is going to respond to me. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Thanks be to God. Thanks be to God.

When is the last time you heard his voice calling you? So many people shrug it off because they can't fathom it. It doesn't make sense to the natural mind. It was never supposed to make sense to the natural mind.

Paul said your faith is not to rest on the persuasion of man. It is to rest in the power of God. Mighty man of valor.

Mighty woman of valor. Mighty young person of valor. Mighty college student of valor.

I call you says the Lord. Mighty man of substance and riches and power and wealth. It can't be found in this world.

It can't be found on Wall Street. It can't be found in the accolades of man. It can only be found in God.

The word of God has creative power. Beginning was the word was with God. The word became flesh.

We beheld his glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. He was in the beginning with God. Without him, nothing that was made was made.

He was in the beginning, the Bible says. He was the very word that said, let there be light. And light was.

Oh, it would be to God that the church could lay hold of that again. I'm not bound by this body. I'm not bound by my past.

I'm not bound by my education. I'm not bound by my former life style, whatever it is. God calls me.

And when God calls me and speaks to me, I've become something other than what I have been without him. I stand with a wealth that doesn't come from man. A wisdom that doesn't come from learning.

It comes from Almighty God, who just looks at my life and your life and says, let there be a new mind. Let there be a new heart. Let there be new wishes, new desires.

Let there be a new strength. Paul said to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2, 15, study and show thyself approved to God. A workman that needeth not to be ashamed rightly dividing the word of truth.

We take that verse of scripture, but and we are to study. But it's not just that we can argue our adversaries. And that's the modern concept of studying the Bible.

Even I go to Bible school or Bible class so that I can out argue the Muslims. I walk away saying, well, I won that when I put him to shame. I didn't win him to Christ, but I put him to shame.

No. It means. Study so that you will not stand ashamed and powerless before the strength of your enemies.

Study so that you will not be enslaved by the power of your enemy. Study. Because God says every promise I have breathed into this book is for you.

How it changes your Bible reading. When you open up the Bible and all of a sudden you realize, hey, hey, everything that Jesus went on Calvary is mine. This is mine.

And you begin to look at the promises of God. And begin to walk away saying, God. Beloved, it changes your whole devotional life.

Lord, this is mine. Not by power nor by might. But by your spirit, it's mine.

This is promised to me. And you begin to walk by faith, thanking God. Thank you that you're going to do this in me.

Thank you that you're going to change me. Thank you that you're going to release the substance of Christ. The wealth of Christ is now mine.

Hallelujah. You're going to change me in this area of my life. And it's going to be a testimony for your glory. You're going to take away everything that shouldn't be there. And you're going to add to me things that shouldn't be there daily. Daily you will be my delight.

Morning by morning I will see new mercy in my life. Thanks be to God. I love this passage of scripture because I see how tenderly God reintroduces correct theology to Gideon.

And ultimately for a season to his generation. God was very tender with this young man because he had not been trained up in the way of faith. And Gideon had fear in his heart as I suppose many from time to time do.

And Gideon says if I've found grace in your sight show me a sign that it's you talking with me. And then he runs to prepare a lunch as it is an offering to the messenger of God. And he brings it all and puts it on top of a rock.

And the scripture says that the angel of the Lord put the end of the staff that was in his hand and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes. And there came a fire out of the rock and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. And then the angel departed out of his sight.

God says if you want a sign that it's my voice here's the sign. My power will consume the frailty of your flesh and all of its efforts. If you trust me I will engulf you in my strength.

I will change you from image to image. You'll become a new creation. You'll be absolutely born again by the spirit of God.

He said to the lead us in church I counsel you to buy of me gold tried in the fire. Once the promise is in his heart. I believe right now as I'm speaking that many of you are saying oh God.

Oh God I'm so weak in this area or that in my life. But oh Jesus. If you will just I've tried so hard and I've failed so often I'm so discouraged at times.

But oh God. If I bring that to you if I'm hearing correctly you will come and engulf that weakness in your strength. You will literally empower you will consume that weakness.

And it will be your might and your power that causes me to stand. It will be the beginning as it is of the substance of Christ being released in me. And released through me.

I think too many people set out to preach the gospel today and they're not yet free. They don't yet have the substance or the understanding of Christ. And then he gives him a specific instruction.

It came to pass verse 25 the same night that the Lord said to him take your father's young bullock. Even the second bullock of seven years old and throw down the altar of Baal that your father has. And cut down the grove that is by it.

Now let me tell you something there will never be victory. Until you make the intent in your heart. You form the intent to disassociate yourself from that which is rendering everyone around you powerless.

Before their enemies. Why do you think we speak so hard about television? The Sopranos and other such like foolishness. Why do you think we speak so hard? Because we want to deprive you of entertainment?

No.

You see there will be no power. There will be no being used of God. There will be no mighty deliverance comes through you for your family or your community, your friends.

And who knows the limits because there are no limits with God. Until you make the choice to turn away from it. And you see Gideon knew there was a tremendous risk to this because the people were so engulfed in the pursuit of prosperity.

That you know the story that his father's friends all gathered around when he destroyed the altar of Baal. They wanted to put him to death. And even in the church of Jesus Christ when you begin to disassociate from false altars you're going to find persecution.

You're going to find difficulty come your way. You will not necessarily be well spoken of. But God protected him.

And God will protect you when you finally make the choice. Folks I've had to make some tough choices over the years. Choices I didn't understand but the spirit of God was on me.

When I was a young Christian I had a desire. I had a desire to go on with God. I had a sense in my heart that there was a purpose for my life.

I wanted to know the purpose and when I began to cry out to God that he would use me. He began to come to me and speak about things that many consider insignificant. But they're not insignificant if you want to know the power of God.

I remember I was the lead singer in a choir. A secular police choir. One of the lead singers.

And I remember I tried to push away the conviction that I should no longer be singing these songs. Some of you would say well they were harmless and I guess they were in some cases. Some were not.

But I remember the conviction came so strong on me that finally in one practice I opened my mouth to sing and nothing came out just air. I couldn't sing anymore. And finally I said I'm sorry I can't do this anymore.

I feel the call of God on me. I've got to separate. The fiercest opposition I experienced was from other Christians in that choir.

They were not kind to me. I judged no one. I said nothing to anybody.

I just backed away and they accused me of things like David's brothers accused him when he came into the army. But you see when he made the choice to disassociate very shortly after that. Verse 34 the Bible says the spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon.

Don't ask for the Holy Spirit if you don't want to turn away from the things that have captivated America. Forget it. It's a futile.

It's a goose chase. You'll end up with the rest that are running the nation looking for God. Don't ask for the Holy Spirit if your pursuits are not going to become those of Jesus Christ.

And then again in verse 36 Gideon asked the Lord for a sign. But this is theology now. This is right doctrine being reintroduced to Gideon.

And he says listen I'm sorry I'm going to paraphrase this. But God I really just need another sign. I'm going to throw a sheep's fleece out on the ground.

And if it's I don't know if I have the right order. If the ground is wet and the fleece is dry then I know you're speaking to me. And so he throws it out and the ground is wet and the fleece is dry.

And he said well just in case it's a fluke let's do it the other way around. I'll throw it out again. And if the ground is dry and the fleece is wet then I know you'll be speaking to me.

And I'm amazed that the Lord just simply goes along with this. And I'll tell you why. Because he was teaching Gideon that when I put my hand on something or somebody it takes a different form than the environment that's around it.

That was the theology. Gideon I want to show you something. When my hand is on you it makes you different than your environment.

Everyone can be wet you'll be dry. Everyone can be dry you'll be wet. The whole of New York can be panicking you'll be stable.

Everyone can be confused you will know what's going on. You will have wisdom. Hallelujah.

Then Gideon forms an army of several thousand. And the Lord comes to him and says now I have to show you some new theology again. I've got to take away all the natural possibility that you can win this battle in the flesh.

If you wonder why you seem to be decreasing it's because Christ is increasing in you. It's the glory it's the grace of God that is taking away your natural all of the natural things that you want to bring into the kingdom of God. All right thank you for helping me in this area but God I'm really strong over here.

And you and I are working together and God says oh no. No no. No no.

Just me. Not you. And then he begins to take away the strong areas.

Oh 23,000 is too many. Let's take it down to 10. 10 is too many.

Let's take it down to less. Oh how about 300 against 135,000 million. God says that sounds just about right.

Thank God. There have been times in my Christian walk that I have screamed at God. Failing to understand that it's his mercy that allows me to decrease that he may increase.

It's actually the increase of Christ. That's the way John the Baptist said that he must increase I must decrease. It's the increase of Christ that causes the decrease of the natural man and not the other way around.

Chapter 7 again Gideon says I hope you don't mind one more time Lord. God says if you're afraid let me show you something else. He said go and sneak up beside the Midian camp.

And he said I'm going to I'm going to teach you some new theology again. And so he sneaks down because in his heart he's still really concerned. And if you really don't have Christ by faith there'd be a reason to be concerned in that kind of a battle.

And he snuck down beside a tent and he listened to a conversation. And a man told a dream he had to another friend and he said I dreamed a dream and a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian. And it came to a tent and rolled it over smote it that it fell and overturned it and the tent all was flat along the ground or lay along.

And his fellow answered and said this is nothing else but the sword of Gideon the son of Joash a man of Israel for into his hand has God delivered Midian and all the host. You see when God is in the battle the fear of certain defeat will go into the very ranks of hell that oppose you. I'll say that again.

There have been many things that have opposed the testimony of Christ in you and I. But when God is in the battle and you are following him as the Holy Spirit is leading you there is a fear that goes into the heart of your enemies. God says I put the fear there the devil's belief and they tremble because they know. Here comes another praying grandmother who's just sick of the devil rolling over her grandchildren.

And it's standing up by faith and beginning to speak lovingly into their lives and she's going into the prayer closet and she will not take no for an answer. And all of hell begins to tremble. I hope sometime that God would just open your ears to this reality.

When we went to Nigeria we knew the potential danger in these meetings because the security told us they were taking guns and knives and such like as they saw them at least away from people that went in. And we knew this but God gave us the boldness to stand and make a declaration every night that every knee must bow and every tongue must confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Before we begin we'd make the declaration.

How loud over the thousands that were gathered. Received a letter last week or not last week couple weeks ago from one of the pastors and he said those whose hearts were against the work of God and war. I'm trying to remember the way he said it their hearts were against the work of God and they were intent on doing evil were stricken by fear.

Isn't that amazing? A fear overcame them. They were terrified by fear. God says when you are walking in the spirit I will strike a fear into the heart of your enemies.

I will go before you and you'll be more than a conqueror because the defeat is already guaranteed before you even go into the battle. And finally he gives a set of battle instructions. He said you're to take your 300 men Gideon and gather around the enemy up on a hilltop.

You're to take a torch and you're to put it inside a clay jar. And at the appropriate time you're to take that jar and you're to smash it. And the word actually in the original text means you're to absolutely demolish it.

Not crack it. You're to destroy it. That speaks to the human vessel.

God says here's how the battle is won. The fire of God comes into the human vessel. Remember that we're formed out of the dust.

And when we go into the battle we throw away our confidence in the flesh. We throw away our confidence in everything that is made by the hand of man. We hold the torch high.

We don't make an empty boast about our savior. We make a boast about the one who does sit at the right hand of all authority. Who does sit at the right hand of all power.

We make a boast of the one who did come to open every prison door. Who does give sight to the blind. Who does heal those that have been bruised in heart.

Who does preach the gospel of the wealth of God to the poor. That they too might be partakers of faith in the life of Christ. And we stand and we make that declaration.

He said I want you to stand on the hill and you shout the sword of the Lord. That's the word of God. And the sword of Gideon.

The word of God being declared by broken surrendered humanity. Has always been God's plan to bring the victory. There never has been another plan.

There never will be another plan. Those that have said God I cast off the works of the flesh. I cast off the works of darkness.

I cast off the natural thoughts of man. I cast off the ungodly pursuits of the nations around me. And I'm willing to stand on the same hill that you stood on Jesus.

I'm willing to declare your name to my generation. And shout your word from the mountaintops. Believing that you will release by the hundreds of thousands.

People into the glorious liberty of Jesus Christ. And you will overpower our enemies. When Gideon stood and that army stood.

A confusion went into the camp of the enemy. They fled and they killed one another. And they ran as if they were being pursued by the host of heaven.

And indeed they were. God give us a vision again. God help us to understand who we are as the church of Jesus Christ.

This cowering apologetic stupid testimony in this generation wins nobody to Christ. Self pursuit is a disgrace to the name of Jesus. When a generation around us is dying and captivated.

God help Times Square Church to understand our mandate for New York City. The voice of the Lord calls you. The Holy Spirit calls you.

The almighty man of valor. The almighty woman of valor. God calls you.

Rise up out of your indifference. Rise up out of their own pursuits. Rise up out of a life of nothingness.

And hiding and captivity rise up. Society may marginalize you. But not the Lord.

The whole world around may be saying you'll never amount to anything but not God. There's only one voice that counts in this world. He said go.

In this thy might. I'm thinking of Gideon saying oh God. What is the might you're talking about? What's the might? And God said have I not sent you? That's enough.

There's the might. I've sent you. Jesus said all power is given to me in heaven and earth.

All power is mine. All power. Let it sink in.

Go therefore. Here's your might. I've sent you.

All power is mine and I'm in you. You're in me. Says the Lord.

There's your might. Go and teach them therefore baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. And to teach them also in a sense to observe all things.

That I've commanded you. And lo. I am with you always.

Even to the end. Of the world. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Mighty man of power. Mighty woman of valor.

I'm with you. I'm with you. In your home.

I'm with you. In your office. I'm with you.

In your neighborhood. I'm with you. In your struggle.

I'm with you. I'm with you always. R. I call you what you will be.

Hallelujah. If you are oppressed. If you are hiding.

And tired of it. If the enemy is consuming all your labor. I think it's time to let the Holy Spirit begin the work by touching you in the area of your greatest need.

I'm with you. This is a great hour for the church of Jesus Christ. This is a wonderful time for this church to be here in New York City.

What the grand banks of soul winning is. Grand banks are great fishing grounds off the coast of North America. But this is the grand banks of soul winning.

God says I'm calling you to go. Mighty man of valor. I'm with you.

If you feel that you need to respond. If you want to get set free. It has to start by freedom from sin.

It starts by casting down the altars of the society around us. It starts by making the distance between the things that you and I know are captivating us. Making the distance.

So God give me the grace to get rid of this thing. Whatever it is. That's where it starts.

And when Gideon obeyed. Then the Holy Spirit came on him. Ask God today for the grace.

The distance. From sin and immorality. Living a deficient Christian life.

A pursuit that is powerless. Ask him for the grace today and he will give it to you. If the Holy Spirit is speaking to you.

I want to sing that song again. I will serve no foreign God. I want to invite you.

Education Annex as we stand shortly. You can just step forward between the screens. We won't forget you there.

Balcony. You can go to either exit. Main sanctuary.

Slip out. Please come and meet me at this altar. We're going to pray together.

Let's all stand together. Please come. Lord, I'm going to walk with Christ.

I'm going to walk with Christ. Let that be your cry. Please move in closely.

This is not road. When we do an altar call here at Times Square Church. This is not road.

These are absolute. God is meeting people. These are the places of transformation where the heart agrees with God and says, Lord, I'm going this way.

I want to walk this way with you. If you are backslidden, get out of your seat. Crisis out.

Hear my voice one more time and I'll call you not what you are, but what I'll make you confess your sin, confess your fault. Ask me for the power to put it away and I will consume your weakness. With my spirit.

If you're afraid, come, I'll give you the courage. I'll give you a love that casts away your fear. I will cause you to be compassionate.

For the fallenness of man all around you. You will have that compassion. I'll give you discernment.

To know which is a true and which is a false gospel. I'll open your eyes. I'll open your heart.

I'll open your spirit and you'll begin to understand some things you didn't know before. Now let's pray together. Lord Jesus.

Thank you for speaking to me. Thank you for calling. For loving.

And promising. That if I abandon my heart. And my life to you.

You will raise me up. Reveal to me. The treasure of Christ.

You will use my life. For your glory. I thank you Jesus.

That you have given me the faith. To take you at your word. And to go.

As you called me to go. Testifying of your glory. And knowing your power.

And your freedom. Speaking of your life. To this generation.

Use me for your glory. Consume my weakness. By your power.

Give me faith. And cause me to stand. Separated.

From ungodliness. And holding tight. To the love of God for me.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Tell him you love him now.

Just tell him you love him. Hallelujah. This is the conclusion of the message.

This is the conclusion of the message.

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