

The Call of Gideon

by Chuck Smith

Pastor Chuck Smith explores Gideon's call, his doubts, and God's guidance leading to Israel's victory over the Midianites.

Duration: 25:05

Scripture: Judges 6:32, Judges 7:15, Judges 7:20, Judges 7:22, Judges 8:28, Judges 8:34, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Gideon"

Description

In this sermon, Pastor Chuck Smith discusses the story of Gideon from the book of Judges. Gideon was uncertain if God was really with him, so he asked for a sign. He put a fleece out on the ground and asked God to make it wet with dew while the ground remained dry. God granted his request, but Gideon still wanted further confirmation, so he asked for the opposite to happen the next night. Again, God granted his request. Gideon then gathered an army to fight against the Midianites, but God told him to reduce the number of soldiers to only 300. Those who were alert and cupped the water in their hands were chosen, while those who buried their faces in the water were sent home. With this small army, Gideon was able to defeat the Midianites.

Transcript

Oh, let the Son of God enfold you With His Spirit and His love Let Him fill your heart and satisfy your soul
Oh, let Him have the things that mold you And His Spirit like a dove Will descend upon your life and make you whole
Welcome to the Word for Today Featuring the Bible teaching of Pastor Chuck Smith Of Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa, California
Pastor Chuck is currently leading us on a verse-by-verse study For the entire Bible
And on today's edition of the Word for Today We'll be looking at the call of Gideon
As we pick up in Judges, chapter 6, verse 32
And now, picking up with today's message Here's Pastor Chuck Smith
Therefore on that day he called Gideon Jerubabal Saying, let Baal plead for himself
And Jerubabal literally means let Baal plead Because he has thrown down his altar
Then

all the Midianites and the Amalekites
And the children of the east were gathered together
And they went over and they pitched in the valley of Jezreel
Now Jezreel is the valley between Mount Gilboa And Mount Moreh
It is in the eastern part Of the valley of Megiddo
It is known as the valley of Ezdralon Or the valley of Jezreel
The valley of Megiddo They all more or less run together
And it begins at Beth Shemesh Which is just up out of the Jordan River
At the northern end of Mount Gilboa range
And the valley is about Oh, probably 15 miles long and 12 miles wide
A very fertile valley It is the valley where the final battle will be

fought The battle of Armageddon Coming up from Beth Shemesh Is the natural way to invade the land of Israel If you're coming from the north And so the Midianites

and the Amalekites And these people from the east Had come into this valley of Jezreel But the spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon And he blew a trumpet And Abiezer was gathered after him So we notice here the spirit of God Coming upon Gideon And we are going to be reading about this more and more As God's spirit begins to move Upon these men Upon the judges of Israel And he sent messengers throughout all of Manasseh Who also was gathered after him And he sent messengers under the tribe of Asher To Zebulun, to Naphtali And they came up to meet him So he sent messages basically to the tribes that were in the northern section No mention of messages down to Judah Or Simeon or Benjamin or even Ephraim But just those that were in the northern portion And Gideon said unto God If you will save

Israel by my hand as you have said Behold I will put a fleece of wool in the floor And if the dew is on the fleece only And it is dry upon all of the earth around it Then I will know that you will save Israel by my hand as you have said Now this is the second test really The first was if you're really for real If you really mean this And if you're for real Then let me bring you the present And then he saw the angel kindle the fire with his staff And consume the sacrifice Now again he's putting the thing to the test He's uncertain still if God is really in this And so Gideon put the fleece Out on the ground And on the next day He thrust the fleece together or he wrung out the fleece The dew out of the fleece And there was a bowl full of water Then Gideon probably Thought perhaps there is

some kind of Principle here that I'm not familiar with Some law of physics that I don't know It may be that fleece always collects water So he said Lord give me one more chance I'd like to do it again tonight Only let's reverse it In the morning let the ground be covered with dew And let the fleece be dry And so the next morning when the ground was covered with dew And the fleece was dry Gideon determined that God had called him And would deliver the Midianites into his hands Now because of Gideon's putting out this fleece It has instituted a practice by many people Of creating some kind of a fleece Whereby they might ascertain the will of the Lord Or the plan of God We find that even in the New Testament They sought by drawing straws so to speak Casting lots to determine Which of the two

disciples Should take the place of Judas Iscariot Whether it be Barsabbas or Matthias And when they cast the lots the lot fell on Matthias And he was numbered with the twelve We do not read of this practice taking place In the New Testament After the day of Pentecost There is no further mention of people Seeking to ascertain the will of God by Casting of lots or by Drawing straws or by any other method As God's Spirit began to direct the early church And the Spirit spake and said Separate unto me Paul and Barnabas For the ministry wherein I have called them And there began to be a more direct Leading of the Spirit that they understood And no further checking or testing of the leading I think that one of the most important things Is to know whether or not God is in a issue And I think that

that is also one of the most Difficult things to ascertain People are always coming and saying How can I know the will of God If that's really I feel like I want to do this But I don't know if God wants me to do it or not How can I really know if that's what God wants And that is not an easy question to answer All I can do is tell you what I do As Jesus said ask and you shall receive Seek and you shall find Knock and it shall be open unto you So I ask the Lord to guide me And then I knock on doors and see which one opens I don't try to force doors open I think that a lot of times we make a mistake When we get something in our mind And we are determined that this is what God wants And we are going to see it through You know no matter what And we find ourselves constantly pushing Constantly

under pressure Trying to push things Trying to make it happen I don't think we have to make the things of God happen I think that if we are in God's will They are going to happen The doors are going to open up As the Lord said to the church of Philadelphia I have set before you an open door That no man can shut And if God is in it God is going to bless it And God is going to anoint it And it's just going to flow I think where we get into trouble is Trying to make a program go Trying to keep a program alive When God is maybe wanting to kill it I don't think that we should have Any artificial support systems On any program within the church Let's not try to keep it alive With all kinds of efforts And energies of man He is able to work He is able to open the doors he wants And he is able to

close the doors he wants And I have found that many times That at the time God was closing a door I did not understand it But yet I committed myself to it I said well you know we tried When we were looking for property To build Calvary Chapel We had found a piece of property Over on Bay Street And close to Mesa In fact it belonged to Theodore Robbins Ford And they were going to sell us Two thirds of an acre to build our sanctuary And Theodore Robbins was going to build the parking lot For his employees But give us the use of the parking lot on Sundays For our services And so we went to the planning commission of Costa Mesa And showed it to them And they thought that it looked good They told us And so we took it to the planning commission And they denied Our permit We appealed it to the

city council And they were More astute politicians They granted us the permit Providing We would purchase enough extra property In case Theodore Robbins ever rescinded The parking lot We would have enough property of our own to park the cars The neighbors who were in the council meeting Immediately Tripled the prices of their property Figuring they had us over a barrel But instead we said well Evidently this isn't what the Lord wants And we didn't try to force it We didn't try to push it We walked away from it I think now Of what A foolish mistake it would have been to have bought that property How God intervened And how Much trouble we could have gotten into had we forced the issue I think that We need to be flexible We need to be open But I don't think that we ever need to really just

You know do or die kind of force the issues God is able to take care of things And I think that it's when we get into that area of forcing issues That we can easily get out of God's will Go beyond What God is seeking or desiring to do You say well do you use fleeces today No I really don't Do you object to fleeces No I really don't But I I can't really tell you you know some simple easy way to You know just know what God's will is in a given situation It just takes a lot of prayer a lot of waiting upon God And then stepping in faith Then Jerobobel Who is Gideon And all of the people that were with him rose up early and pitched beside the well of Harad Now the well of Harad is at the Foot Of Mount Gilboa Towards the southern end Approximately eight miles from Beth Shemesh And they gathered

together and pitched their tents by the well of Harad So that the host of the Midianites were on the north Side of them by the hill of Morah In the valley of Jezreel so from The spring of Harad You can look out across the valley And they could see the vast host Of the Midianites out there And the Lord said unto Gideon The people that are with thee are Too many For me to give the Midianites into their hands Lest Israel vaunt themselves against Me saying my own hand hath Saved me It is interesting that Though they were outnumbered By a vast amount 135,000 Midianites were slain There were 32,000 Israelites Yet God said if I deliver the Midianites to the 32,000 They'll vaunt themselves And they will declare what they have done They won't give God the glory God when he works Desires to receive

the glory for the work that he has done He doesn't want man taking the glory That belongs to God And yet there seems to be a prevalent danger Of men taking the glory For what the Lord has wrought God does

not appreciate that God did not want that And so God said Cut the army down Go out to the men and proclaim to the ears of the people saying Whoever is fearful and trembling The word afraid there in the Hebrew is trembling Let him return and depart early from the Mount Gilead And there returned of the people 22,000 And there remained only 10,000 And so God now is thinning out the forces In order that he might get men that he might use To bring the victory to Israel In such a way that God will get the glory for the victory And the first that God eliminates Are those that are fearful And

those that are trembling They were disqualified God knows that those that are fearful are looking at the enemy Rather than looking at God God knows that those that are fearful In the midst of the battle Can turn and run and create a panic among the people of God God knows that those that are trembling are weak Cannot stand up to the fight And so he sent home those that were fearful and trembling And the Lord said to Gideon The people are still too many Bring them down to the water and I will try them for you there And it shall be That of whom I say unto thee This shall go with you, the same will go with you And whosoever I will say unto you These shall not go with you, the same shall not go So he brought the people down to the water And the Lord said unto Gideon Everyone that laps the

water with his tongue As a dog lappeth Him shall you set by himself And likewise everyone that bows down upon his knees to drink And the number of them that lapped Putting their hands to their mouth Were three hundred men But all of the rest of the people bowed down on their knees To drink the water So the division was made between those That would cup the water in their hands And drink it out of their hands And those who just got down and put their face in the water And those who would cup the water, the three hundred Then God said, verse seven, by these three hundred I will deliver the Midianites into your hand And let the rest of the people go home To their own villages So those who were not alert Those who did not have the sense of urgency Those who just buried their faces in the

water were sent home And God kept only those Who had the awareness of the urgency of the hour Those that cupped the water in their hands And lapped it out of their hands So the people took vituals in their hands and their trumpets And they sent home the rest of Israel, every man To his own tent And they retained the three hundred men And the host of Midian was beneath them in the valley Now it came to pass that same night That the Lord said unto him Arise and go down to the host For I have delivered them into your hand Okay, get in, go down and wipe them out But if you are afraid Now remember he sent home those that were afraid Those who were fearful and trembling If you're afraid, if you are fearful Go down with Purah, your servant, to the host And you will hear what they are saying And

afterwards your hands will be strengthened To go down unto the host So he went down with Purah, his servant Which of course indicates that he was fearful Unto the outside of the armed men that were in the host And the Midianites and the Amalekites And all the children of the east Were laying along the valley like grasshoppers for multitude Their camels were without number Like the sand by the seaside for multitude And when Gideon was come Behold there was a man that told a dream to his friend And he said Behold I dreamed a dream and lo there was cake of barley bread And it tumbled into the host of Midian And came unto a tent and smote it that it fell And overturned it that the tent lay along And his fellow answered and said This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon The son of Joash, a

man of Israel For into his hand hath God delivered Midian And all of the host So here was a fellow who was sharing his dream And another guy who interpreted his dream And Gideon hears his name in the interpretation That's Gideon the son of Joash And God's delivered Midian into his hand And so it was that when Gideon heard the telling of the dream And the interpretation He worshipped, alright Lord And he

returned to the host of Israel And he said arise for the Lord Has delivered into your hand the host of Midian We'll return with more of our verse by verse study Through the book of Judges In our next lesson As we follow Gideon's defeat over the Midianites And we do hope you'll make plans to join us But right now I'd like to remind you that If you missed any part of today's message Or

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Box 8000 Costa Mesa, California 92628 And be sure to include the call letters Of this station with your correspondence And now on behalf of The Word for Today We'd like to thank all of you Who share in supporting this ministry With your prayers and financial support And be sure to join us again next time As Pastor Chuck Smith Continues his verse-by-verse study Through the book of Judges That's right here On the next edition of The Word for Today And now once again Here's Pastor Chuck Smith I'm looking forward to That work of God's Spirit That He's wanting to accomplish in our lives this week And I pray that your heart will be open To the Spirit That God will be able to work freely in your life Bringing you into those places of victory And may you just learn what it is To know that victory That He gives to us In our places, in our areas of personal weakness May God make this a special week in your life And in my life As we follow after Jesus Christ And as we seek to live For His glory God be with you and bless you in Jesus' name Looking for direction and understanding?

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