

# **Fearless**

## Lesson 9 – Gideon

### **Series Objectives:**

Students will learn:

- That followers of God have nothing to fear.
- Stories that illustrate God's people living out fearless lives.
- That followers of God are called by God to live a fearless life.

**Series Theme Verse:** “Do not tremble, do not be afraid. Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long ago? You are my witnesses. Is there any God besides me? No, there is no other Rock; I know not one.” Isaiah 44:8

### **Lesson Objective:**

Students will understand:

- That God works in ways we do not expect.
- That Gideon lived a fearless life.
- That Israel lived a fearless life by having faith in God.

**Lesson Passage:** Joshua 6-8

### **Lesson Materials:**

**Activity:** Planks of wood (one more than the number of students in a group)

**Bible Story:** Large bowl of water

**Meal:** Nachos

## **Bible Story:**

**Materials:** Large bowl of water

Bring a flat pan or large bowl of water to class today. Tell the children to pretend that the water is a river. All of the children are soldiers and they are getting ready to fight a battle. They are all supposed to drink from the river before they fight in the battle. The commander, Gideon, will choose his army by the way they drink the water. Let the children pretend to drink but do not say how the soldiers will be chosen. Take note to see who kneels down and uses their hand to dip water and drink.

Gideon was the fifth judge over Israel in the book of Judges. Judges were a little different in Gideon's time than they are now. Judges were picked by God to help lead God's people, usually to help them out of being ruled by other people. Gideon is introduced in chapter 6 of the book while he was collecting wheat and hiding it from the enemy. An angel came to him and asked him to take on the task of overthrowing the Midianites, the people that had conquered God's people.

Gideon led God's people and had many people follow him as he prepared to fight the Midianites. He was convinced that God wanted him to lead this huge group of men who had gathered around him. But God said that Gideon had too many men...his army was too big?! God wanted Israel to know that it was not the might of 32,000 men that saved Israel, but God Himself. God asked Gideon to shrink down his army numbers.

Gideon said that the men who were afraid to go to battle were welcome to return home. It must have been scary to see 22,000 men turn around and walk away...Gideon was left with 10,000 brave men (Judges 7:2-3).

Even though these men were brave, they were not all wise. God asked Gideon to take them down to the river and watch them drink. The number of those who drank while keeping guard of their surroundings was 300 men. The other 9,700 bowed down to the water losing sight of potential enemy attacks. (Remind children of how they drank earlier) Point out who (if any) knelt down and drank from their hand. Gideon had to choose just a few men to fight in a battle based on how they drank the water. God said that the 300 men would become Gideon's army to fight against the Midianites (Judges 7:4-8). According to Judges 8:10 there were at least 135,000 enemy troops against Gideon's 300 soldiers.

Gideon and his men prepared themselves for battle. God told Gideon and his servant to sneak down into the camp of the Midianites and hear some encouraging news. They listened in while one Midianite soldier told his dream to another. The dream was that a great barley (bread) loaf rolled into the camp and flattened a tent. The second soldier said that the dream meant that Gideon and the Israelites would destroy the camp of Midian (Judges 7:9-14).

Gideon and his servant returned to the troops excited about what God was going to do through them.

Gideon prepared his men. They were each equipped with a lamp and a horn. The lamp was covered in a pitcher so that their lights did not shine out yet. Gideon spread out the 300 men on the hillside into 3 groups.

They crept down toward the camp with their eyes on Gideon. He instructed them that when he blew his trumpet and broke the pitcher containing the lamp, the soldiers were to do the same. They also yelled out, "the sword of the Lord, and of Gideon."

When they all broke their pitchers and blew their trumpets (creating a great noise) the men inside the enemy camp awoke with fear. Gideon's men yelled out, but did not attack. They stood their ground and did not engage the enemy. The Bible does not say that Gideon's men had any kind of weapons, only trumpets, broken pitchers and lamps (Judges 7:15-22).

The enemy soldiers began fighting those around them instead of with Gideon and his men. Those who survived the self-inflicted battle fled to the outer regions of Israel—right into the home territory of the 30,000 soldiers who were sent home previously. These out of work soldiers then rose up and picked off the enemy army as they fled through their land (Judges 7:23-8:3).

Gideon and his 300 continued to pursue the enemy until they captured kings and princes of the enemy armies. Gideon's victory won the respect of the Hebrew nation. They wanted him to become their king and lead the country. Gideon refused saying that God would lead Israel.

The fear of Gideon and his mighty army spread throughout the region. The fear of Gideon and his men was great enough that Israel lived in peace and worshiped God for the next 40 years until Gideon's death (Judges 8).

### **Activity:** Teamwork Makes the Dreamwork

**Materials:** Planks of wood (one more than the number of students in a group)

The Activity:

- Explain to students that the Activity Room has flooded and a great river is now flowing through the middle of the room.
- As a team, they must use the planks to cross the river to get safely to the other side.
- There are a couple rules:
  - The planks cannot be thrown.
  - No one can swim, so if someone falls off a board, they must start over.
- Give the group one more plank than the total number of kids (8 kids in a group, the group gets 9 boards) in the group, and let them figure out how to get everyone across the river.
- After they have made it to the safety of the other side, explain to the kids that in their story today, they will see how a man named Gideon used faithfulness in God and teamwork to have a small group of men win a battle over a huge group of men. Gideon was definitely "Fearless"!
- Time is almost up and we still have to cross back over the river to leave!
- Give the group the number of planks as there are kids in the group (8 kids equals 8 planks) and let them figure out how to get back across the room.

**Music:** Preparation for Musical on May 20.