



Last Sunday we continued our new series in Judges with part 2 of God using Gideon and Israel in their weakness to show his strength. As we take a deeper look at chapter 7 we notice that before Israel can defeat the Midianites, the LORD has to deal with Israel's doubt of his word and their tendency to boast by showing them that salvation will be all of him.

#### **Don't doubt God's word**

Gideon has been called by the LORD, anointed with his Spirit, given the LORD's confirmation of a sure victory, but Gideon can't help but doubt. In verse 33-40 of chapter 6 we get the famous 'fleece' episode. This is not a method of seeking guidance but evidence of his doubt. Gideon doubts because he doesn't completely trust in the LORD, who outside of his own experience, has done great things in Israel. Secondly, he doubts because he is afraid of failing, thinking that salvation is partly of him, not just the LORD.

#### **Don't boast in your own success**

The LORD knows Israel is prone to boasting if they win, saying, "My own strength has saved me." God reduces the army from 32,000 down to 300 so there is no chance humanly speaking that Israel can boast. As Christians, we are guilty of both doubting God's word and boasting in our success but when we realise salvation is all of the LORD then there is no reason to do those things

#### **Salvation is all of the LORD.**

We noted in 3 steps how the LORD took Israel to defeat Midian. Firstly, he puts doubt into the minds of Midian through a dream (7:9-15) This fear puts Midian on

the back foot even before they've started fighting. Secondly, Gideon's tactics for ambush, with their trumpet sounds and right lights surrounding the camp, confused the Midianites so when it happened the Midianites were overwhelmed and began to kill one another. Salvation came without Israel lifting a sword.

*Here are some questions to get you started on exploring the passage and driving home any application.*

Summarise Judges 6 together to remind one another of how the story began.

**Read 6:33-40** What does Gideon do in these verses and how would you explain Gideon's reservations? What do you think of God's response?

How can we doubt what God says in the Bible? Can you share examples of this in your life?

How does Jesus contrast to Gideon in terms of his trust and obedience to the LORD?

**Read 7:1-8a** What is Israel's sinful tendency and how does God address it? How do you think Gideon and the Israelite soldiers felt while all this reducing was going on? How might this have increased their fear?

Can you think of ways in which you are quick to boast or become proud when things go well?

Can you think of times when the Lord has brought to a place where you can do nothing but cry out for his help?

**Read 7:8b-25** What does the LORD do to strike fear in Midian but give confidence to Gideon?

What do you think of the ambush tactics of Gideon, how did he know this was going to work? Why did the Midianites begin killing each other? How do we see salvation here was of the LORD?

Why is it important to know and believe that salvation from our sins is all of Jesus and not anything to do with us?