

Sermon: Gideon – Strong Start, Stronger Finish | The Well Community Church | 20th July 2025

Welcome to The Well Community Church Indian Service – Greetings in the name of our LORD and SAVIOR Jesus Christ.

Good morning everyone,

Today, as we continue our series Strong Start, Stronger Finish, we will look closely at the life of Gideon, one of the most interesting and teaching figures in the Old Testament. Gideon's story shows deep spiritual truths about how God chooses, helps, and uses ordinary people for amazing things. But it also teaches us that success without being humble can lead to turning away from God.

Our focus is not only on how Gideon started but also on how he finished. We will learn lessons that help us live lives that not only start well but finish well in God's eyes.

1. Gideon's Humble Beginning: God Chooses the Weak

Verse 6 - So, Israel was brought very low because of Midian, and the sons of Israel cried out to the Lord. One of the best things they did was cry out to the Lord. Of course, we often do the same when we face trouble. But if you remember the first Sunday of our series, we talked about King Asa—he did not go to God even in his illness. We learned a lesson there. But here, the Israelites are turning to God for help.

*Verse 10 says I told you, 'I am the Lord your God. You must not worship the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you now live.' But **you have not listened to me***

Mark this verse—what is God saying about His people? "You have not listened to Me." I told you, but you did not listen. It's the same with us—God often speaks to us about something again and again, asking us to listen and obey. Be careful, because one day, we don't want to hear Him say, "You have not listened to Me." Take this statement seriously

The Book of Judges begins with a hard picture: Israel is in trouble. For seven long years, the Midianites had come into the land, destroying crops, animals, and homes. The people were very scared. The Bible says they hid in caves and safe places to live.

It was at this hard time that we met Gideon. He was not a great soldier or leader. He was beating wheat in a winepress, a hidden place, trying to keep food safe from the Midianites. This tells us something important about Gideon's character. He was careful, maybe even scared, and for sure humble.

Then, God's angel comes to him and calls him a "mighty warrior." This must have surprised Gideon, who knew he was the least important in the weakest family in his tribe. His honest answer is strong: "How can I save Israel? My family is the weakest... and I am the least in my family." This humbleness is not a weakness but truth.

Here we see the first big truth: God does not call the qualified; He makes the called ready. God's power is strongest in our weakness. He does not need us to be strong or skilled, but He wants hearts that want to obey. Gideon's doubt and humbleness became the best place for God's power to grow.

Sometimes, like Gideon, we feel not ready or not good enough. But God's call does not depend on our strength; it depends on His power working through us. This is hope for all of us who feel weak in what God wants us to do.

To help Gideon move forward in faith, God gives him a sign—the famous fleece test—where dew falls on the fleece but not on the ground, and then the other way around. This sign comforts Gideon that God is with him. God is patient with our doubts and meets us where we are. Our faith often starts with questions and fears, but God slowly invites us to trust Him step by step.

2. Obedience Despite Fear (Judges 6:25–32)

Next, God gives Gideon a hard task—to tear down his father's altar to Baal and build an altar to the Lord. This was dangerous because many people worshipped Baal in the community. Gideon's obedience was brave but careful—he did it at night, quietly.

Even though Gideon was still scared and unsure, his obedience was real and important. God honors obedience, even when it is not perfect or confident. It is the act of faith that counts. Many of us wait to obey God fully because of fear, what others think, or not being sure. But God wants us to take the first step in faith, trusting that He will help us keep going.

Gideon's obedience caused problems with his family and neighbors. Still, this act prepared the way for God to save His people. It reminds us that obeying God often brings challenges but always leads to victory.

Gideon's obedience to God was not easy. It created tension and opposition from his own family and community. When he tore down the altar of Baal and cut down the Asherah pole, the people around him were angry, even ready to kill him. Yet, despite this backlash, Gideon remained faithful to God's instructions. His bold act of obedience became a turning point because it cleared the way for God to act powerfully on behalf of Israel. This moment reminds us that following God may bring resistance, misunderstandings, or even conflict, especially from those closest to us. But in the end, obedience to God opens the door to His deliverance and lasting victory.

3. God's Power and Amazing Victory (Judges 7)

After Gideon gathers an army, God tells him that he has too many men. God wants to make sure Israel does not brag that the win came from their strength. So God cuts the army from 32,000 men to just 300.

This big cut shows clearly: the victory belongs only to God. Sometimes God asks us to trust Him with less—less people, less money, less ability—so that His power can shine more.

The battle that follows is not usual. With trumpets, torches hidden in jars, and loud shouting, Gideon and his men cause fear in the Midianite camp. The enemy gets confused and fights each other, and Israel wins a great victory.

This story shows us that God's ways are not our ways. Our strength, numbers, and weapons do not guarantee success. What matters is God's power and our faith to follow Him. God controls every battle in our lives.

This moment is called Gideon's "impossible victory." Yet, it was God's miracle. We also face battles that seem impossible, health problems, money troubles, family fights, or spiritual attacks. Gideon's story shows that when we depend on God's power, impossible things can happen.

4. The Danger of Pride and Turning Away from God (Judges 8:22–27)

After the victory, the people want Gideon to be their king, but he says no, telling them the Lord will rule over them. This shows Gideon's humbleness and faithfulness. But still, Gideon makes an ephod from the gold taken from the enemy. The ephod was a special priestly cloth, and it became an object that Israel started to worship, leading them back to false gods.

This gives us a serious warning: success can lead to pride and turning away from God. Even a great leader like Gideon can fall into worshipping symbols or achievements instead of God Himself.

Pride is a hidden danger for all of us, especially after good times and blessings. The Bible says, "Pride goes before destruction, a proud spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 16:18). We must always watch our hearts, stay humble before God, and avoid trusting anything more than Him.

Gideon's ephod became a trap for the people, pulling them away from God. Like this, we must be sure nothing takes God's place in our hearts—whether it is success, comfort, tradition, or things we own.

5. Gideon's Legacy and Final Lessons (Judges 8:28–35)

Gideon lived to see peace in Israel for forty years, which shows God's blessing. But after he died, Israel quickly went back to idol worship and chaos. Gideon's family also had troubles, especially his son Abimelek, who caused fights and pain.

This tells us that finishing strong is not only about winning or success but also about what we leave behind. The impact we have on the next generations, our family, community, and church is very important.

Finishing strong means being faithful, humble, and caring about the spiritual health of others. The blessings we get are meant to be shared and passed on, not just enjoyed by us alone.

Our lives are not just stories by themselves but parts of God's big story for His people. We must live in a way that honors God now and helps those who come after us.

Conclusion

Gideon's life teaches us many important lessons. God can use anyone—no matter how weak, scared, or ordinary—to do great things. The secret to a strong start is obeying God and having faith, even when we are afraid or unsure.

But success can be dangerous if we don't stay humble and depend on God. Gideon's ephod warns us about quietly turning away from God and worshipping other things. We must guard our hearts every day and stay faithful to God's calling.

Lastly, our legacy is important. We should live with a focus on eternity, investing in the future by living godly lives today.

May we be like Gideon in his best times—obedient, trusting, and brave—but also learn from his mistakes so that we finish stronger than we started, faithful and humble until the end.

Let us promise today to fully trust God's power, obey Him completely, watch out for pride, and leave a good legacy for His kingdom.

Let us pray for God's strength and grace to live like this.

God did not forsake or leave Gideon.

In fact, all throughout Gideon's journey, **God was with him**, guiding him, strengthening him, and giving him victory. From the moment the Angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon in Judges 6, God showed:

- **Patience** with his doubts (Gideon asked for signs),
- **Power** in battle (defeating Midian with just 300 men),
- **Presence** through His Spirit (Judges 6:34 says "the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon").

However, after Gideon's great victory, **he made an ephod** (Judges 8:27) from the gold taken from the Midianites, and it became **a trap** for him and Israel. They began to worship the ephod, and that led them back toward idolatry.

Even then, the Bible doesn't say God left Gideon. But we see that **Gideon himself stepped out of alignment with God's ways**. He chose actions that caused spiritual damage, though he may not have intended it.

So to be clear:

- God **did not forsake** Gideon.
- But **Gideon's later choices** led to spiritual drift, and that had consequences for the people.

This teaches us that **God is faithful**, but we must continue to walk closely with Him to finish strong. God's presence never leaves us, but **our choices can distance us** from His guidance and blessing.

Application Questions to Think About

1. **Am I listening to God or ignoring His voice?**
God spoke to the Israelites and to Gideon, but they often didn't listen. Is there something God has been speaking to me about lately that I have been avoiding or ignoring?
2. **Do I feel too weak or unqualified to be used by God?**
Like Gideon, do I struggle with fear or self-doubt? What would it look like to trust that God's strength is enough in my weakness?
3. **Am I obeying God, even when it's hard or scary?**
Gideon obeyed God at night because he was afraid—but he still obeyed. What step of obedience is God asking me to take, even if I feel nervous or unsure?
4. **When God brings success in my life, do I stay humble?**
After victory, Gideon made a mistake with the ephod. Am I careful to give God the glory and stay humble when things go well?
5. **Is there anything in my life that has become more important than God?**
Have I allowed anything—my work, money, comfort, or even ministry—to become like an idol that replaces my trust in God?
6. **Am I helping to pass on faith and truth to the next generation?**
Gideon's legacy did not last after his death. What kind of legacy am I leaving for my children, church, or community?
7. **Will I finish my race strong, or will I drift away after a good start?**
What do I need to do today to stay close to God and end my life well in His eyes?