

Judges 8:4-21  
War with Midian part 2  
Outline for congregation

Fear and injustice (vv4-9)

- The people of Succoth and Penuel won't feed Gideon and his troops (v6, 8)
- Fear behind our moral choices and intimidation as a technique

Fear and harshness (vv10-17)

- Zebah and Zalmunna are captured (v12) and used to vindicate Gideon (v15)
- Gideon "taught the men... a lesson" (v18) – why not rather sympathize with their fearfulness?

Fear and humiliation (vv18-21)

- Gideon would use his son to teach a lesson to Zebah and Zalmunah – but his son is afraid (v20)
- The courage of God's Son, Jesus, gives strength to the humble

Questions for reflection

1. What are your great fears? What do you imagine to be the worst things that can happen to you? How do these fears determine the decisions you make? Do they ever keep you from doing what you know is right?
2. In what situations do you try to intimidate others in order to control them? Are there other things you can do besides "overpowering" them?
3. It is understandable that Gideon was angry with Succoth and Penuel – but as someone who had been controlled by fear, it may be surprising that his anger with them is greater than his sympathy for them. When you find yourself angry with others, how can you determine if your anger stems from the fact that you are impatient with a problem you yourself wrestle with? How do we develop compassion for people whose flaws are similar to our own?
4. In Matthew 10:26-33 Jesus tells us not to fear people who would threaten us, but rather to fear God (who is the final judge, and also cares about us). Why is it easier to fear people than to fear God? Why is our fear of God often an unhealthy fear, and how can a true reverence for God free us from the control fear has over us?
5. How can the power of Christ give us greater strength than what comes from self confidence? What does it look like to humbly trust him as we face scary situations?