

**THE BIG IDEA: Simple obedience leads to supernatural outcomes.**The Take-Off

Have you ever done everything you're supposed to do but were still waiting for things to be done?

You're dressed and ready to leave, but someone in the family isn't?

You've done all the right things, but someone is still doing wrong towards you?

You've repented for the sin of speeding and as your reward, you've gotten behind a large piece of farm equipment on a curvy country road with all double lines?

I think we can all relate to situations like these or others where we've done our part and are waiting on someone else to do theirs, can't we?

In fact, you and I could feel that way right now.

We just wrapped up the Battle Ready series, and it would be easy to get into a "now what" mentality.

But the truth is that very often we find ourselves "dressed and ready to go" and yet we can't go ... yet.

Paul told the Ephesian believers that evil would come, and that they could stand when it did, and even after it did.

He acknowledged that there would be times of waiting, and that we would need to know what to do in those times.

God's word through Paul? "When you've done everything, stand."

In other words, fighting FROM victory often means fighting OFF the enemy.

It requires a position of determination and confidence, and that all starts with the first 3 words of **Ephesians 6:13** ...

"Therefore put on..."

We know that we need to stand (after all, Paul says it 4x in 4 verses). The purpose of this series isn't to convince you of that.

The purpose of this six-week series is show you HOW we're supposed to STAND, and this morning we're kicking it off by talking about what must happen before anything else: we must stand IN obedience.

Obedience is a big deal because it unlocks something supernatural.

Obedience doesn't make you a child of God - after all, it's not a work that earns us something; but obedience takes you close to the heart of God.

It isn't an act first; it's a attitude first, and something happens when we stand IN obedience.

**Simple obedience leads to supernatural outcomes.**

Let me say that again, because that's your Big Idea: **simple obedience leads to supernatural outcomes.**

We can see that by implication in **Ephesians 6**, because Paul basically tells the believers that by putting on the full armor, they'd stand against powers that are more powerful than they are.

Anyone who has ever tried to overcome an addiction or a habitual sin knows how hard that is, and can recognize that victory over evil is, in and of itself, supernatural.

But I want to break this Big Idea apart and really make sure you see how **simple obedience can lead to supernatural outcomes**, and for that, I need you to find **Judges 7**.

While you're turning to **Judges 7**, let's take a closer look at obedience.

**1. Obedience sets the table**

- a. Obedience is a big deal in the kingdom, not because God is a "you better do it or else" mean God, but because He's a relational God
- b. When your kids don't obey you, you don't kick them out, but there's a problem in the relationship, right?
- c. Same with God, because He knows that our obedience is an INDICATOR of our hearts
- d. A couple scriptures to help us here:
  - **John 14:15, 21 and 23** - 3x John Jesus says our love for Him is revealed by our obedience of Him
  - **1 John 5:3** - even clearer!
- e. This is key: obedience must be based in trust and love, not in fear, because often the very thing God asks us to do could cause us to fear because they won't make sense to us.
- f. Case in point: an already outnumbered Israel army led by Gideon in **Judges 7**.
- g. **Verse 2** / too many? They were outnumbered 135,000 to 32,000!
- h. God started to lower that number and ended up at 300.
- i. Now, Gideon was even more outnumbered. In fact, Gideon's obedience made no sense, and very often what God calls us to do won't, because our obedience is simply setting the table for what comes next.

- j. Before we take a look at what did come next for Gideon and the 300 he still had, I need to make a statement that you may need to chew on.
- k. **Simple obedience means never using the mind God gave us to talk ourselves out of the task He's giving us.**
- l. It doesn't mean we don't think, it simply means we don't try to outthink the God who knows everything.
- m. We trust, because obedience is based in trust, and when we do, something amazing happens at the table that we've set...

## 2. God serves the meal

- a. Can we just admit that God knows FAR more than we do?
- b. That He is working behind the scenes in the battle in ways that we will rarely ever know, and even if we did know, wouldn't understand.
- c. He is, after all, God.
- d. And yet He is so gracious - even as He was preparing to serve an amazing victory, He allowed Gideon's potential fear to be built into faith by hearing what the Midianites were saying (**verse 15**).
- e. And then, God asked Gideon to take one more crazy step of obedience: divide the 300 into 3 groups of 100 each, give them clay jars with lit torches inside, and then wait for a sign before smashing them and yelling.
- f. Gideon's (and the men's) obedience set the table for a rout of the Midianites - all without ever even fighting! (see verse 21 - "each man held his position")
- g. Why did God fight for them? Because He keeps His word!!
- h. **Exodus 23:22** / He fights for the obedient!!

### The Landing

What do we takeaway from this amazing story of God routing 135,000 people with only 300?

That **simple obedience leads to supernatural outcomes!**

Simple obedience doesn't mean passive waiting: it means we DO what we can NOW while we wait for God to do what only He can do NEXT.

For Gideon, it was lowering his army by 99%.

For the Ephesians (and us), it's putting on the armor.

For our church, it's walking around and praying for a city all while trusting that as we do what we can NOW, God will do what only he can do NEXT.

And He will. For our church, for our city, for me, and for you.

Our obedience sets the table, and God serves the meal.

**Simple obedience leads to supernatural outcomes.**

Let's pray.