Gideon 7:1-8, 16-22

I’m going to ask you a few questions now, about whether you think it’s better to have more or fewer of some things. I’ll need you to shout out what you think – is it better to have more or fewer of these things.

**[slide]** First: in a football match – is it better to have 11 players or 10 players?

**[slide]** If you had to deliver leaflets to every house in Cambridge, would it be better to have more people to help, or fewer?

**[slide]** If someone was to give out sweets, would it be better to give out lots of sweets, or not many sweets?

**[slide]** If you want to win a race, is it better to have a car with lots of power, or not much power?

**[slide]** Great answers! Sometimes we’re really good at working out if it’s better to have more or fewer of something. In the story we just read, the Israelites were under attack from a big army – some people think the army was attacking them had 150,000 people in it. **[slide]** So Gideon gathered together as big an army as possible – he got together 32,000 people to go and fight: 32,000 to go against 150,000.

Now Gideon was very scared, because 32,000 is not many people compared to 150,000. But do you remember what God said in the story? God said 32,000 is too many to go and fight 150,000! Too many! So God told all the people who were scared to go home **[slide]** and his army got smaller, and Gideon was only left with 10,000!

But God said that’s still too many – so he told all those who didn’t drink water like a dog to go home; **[slide]** and his army got smaller and Gideon was left with only 300 people! **[slide]** Next to the enemy army, that was tiny! Can you even still see Gideon’s army there - the dot is as small as I could make it, and I think it’s still too big!

But, can you remember the reason why it was, that God said Gideon had too many men? Why did he tell all of those people to go home? **[slide]** God said “You have too many men. I cannot deliver Midian into their hand, or Israel would boast against me, “My own strength has saved me.”

Whether they had fought with 32,000 men, or 300 men, or even 200,000 men; they had God on their side, and so were going to win. But God wanted to show them that it was because of him, and only him, that they won the battle. And so he made the army much smaller. There was no way Gideon’s 300 men could boast about how they won the battle; it was only by God, and they had to thank him for it.

**[slide]** In each of our own lives we don’t have the problem of a big army coming to attack us, but we do have an even bigger problem. We have a problem with sin. And next to the problem of sin, we’re even smaller than that tiny dot you can barely see. But just like God helped Gideon win the battle, God helps us in a way that only he can. **[slide]** In the New Testament it says “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.” Just like with Gideon, there’s no way we could be saved without God. So let’s not boast, or think we’re better; let’s say thank you to God, and give him all of the praise. And that’s something we’re going to do in the next song.