A weak Man, in a weak Clan, w/a weak Plan

I. Slide1 Announce:
   A. Pastors Wives Retreat next week (M-W) They’ve asked us to do 2 things:
      1. Help Hostess & direct ladies to workshops (Mon & Tues afternoon for a few hours)
      2. Bring baked goods for the hospitality table.
         a) Please see Cindy tonight. She has all the times and details. Can also email/call Kel.
   B. Slide2 Comedy W/a Cause - tickets available tonight (also at the door)
      1. It's difficult to imagine that 50% of adults will develop depression, anxiety, self-harm, eating disorders, bipolar disorder, PTSD, borderline personality disorder, schizophrenia, or some other mental illness in their lifetime. This staggering reality can feel daunting, but there is HOPE for mental health.

II. Slide4 Intro: A weak Man, in a weak Clan, w/a weak Plan
   A. This is the 4th cycle of sin.
   B. The evil of Israel can be summed up in 3 words: infidelity, idolatry, & intermarriage.
   C. Slide5 The setting for Gideon’s story is in the same Jezreel Valley as the last chapter.
      1. The Valley runs from the Mediterranean, right into the Transjordan & the great eastern desert through a narrow passage called Harod Valley, named after the Harod Springs.
      2. This Valley became an inviting doorway that funneled the Midianites into the broad basin.

III. Slide6 2 SINS (1-10)
   A. Fearing gods, rather than God - Prov.9:10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.
   B. Disobedience to God’s voice -
   C. Slide7 (1-3) [see map] Midianites (strife) - 4th son of Abraham/Keturah(2nd wife). So, cousins or 1/2 bro’s of the Hebrews. A nomadic people. An Arabian tribe. Joseph was sold to.
D. Slide 8 (4) Here the Midianites use their Scorched Earth Policy. Finally outlawed as recent as 1977 at the Geneva Convention. A military strategy of burning or destroying buildings, crops, or other resources that might be of use to an invading enemy force.

E. Slide 9 (5) 1st time hear of camels being used in a tactic of warfare. Newest Military Advancement

1. 28-30 miles a day (but up to 100). 3 days w/o food & water.
2. Thus, giving the Midianites an immense tactical superiority.
3. Dromedaries are native to the Arabian Peninsula and Africa. There are close to 14 million Dromedaries, many still being used to transport people and goods across inhospitable places. Where they were once an Arabian fixture (there are 160 words in Arabic for camel)
4. A riding camel can travel 80 to 120 miles in a day.
5. Fun Camel Facts:
   a) Difference between Dromedaries and Bactrians? Take the first letter in their names and drop it onto its flat side. ["D" in Dromedary has 1 hump. "B" in Bactrian has 2]
   b) Camels have a reputation for spitting but they don't, it would be a waste of water. What they are actually doing is vomiting on you.
   c) A camel's poop is so dry you can use it immediately to start a fire.
   d) Q: What do you call a camel without a hump? A: Humphrey (Hump-free).

F. Slide 10a (7-10) Ok, I hear a cry...but how about a confession?

1. Hos.5:15 Then I will return to my place until they admit their guilt and turn to me. For as soon as trouble comes, they will earnestly search for Me.
2. The Israelites problem was not their enemies but their disobedient hearts.
   a) Hmm, could this be our problem sometimes?

IV. Slide 11 2 PUSHBACKS (11-23)

A. Where is God - if the Lord is w/us...
B. Whom am I - I’m a weak man, in a weak clan, w/a weak plan.
C. (11) Wheat in a winepress? Instead of up on the hill top w/a breeze...In a pit on the ground where he’d be less visible/vulnerable.
D. Slide12 (12) Mighty man of valor (aka Mighty Warrior, where we got our HS name from Warriors)

1. I bet he turned around at this point to see who He was talking about.
2. The Lord saw what Gideon would become, not as he was. (in hall of faith Heb.11:32)
3. So, Gideon doesn’t come on stage as a hero.

E. (14) Might of yours - or, go with the strength you have (both NIV & NLT).

1. Slide13a How can we do that? because, He is sending you.

F. 13b (15) I’m unqualified - msg I’m the runt of the litter.

1. 13c Often we’re too strong for God to use us (i.e. He uses the weak).
   [actually, we think we’re too strong]
2. 13d Remember there’s a fine line between humility & disobedience.
   a) Slide14a Balance? Don’t be full of confidence. Don’t be w/o confidence. Be full of God confidence...I can do all things...
3. The Christian’s confidence should rest in God’s presence & power, not in personal abilities or resources. Dr. David Jeremiah Study Bible notes

G. Slide14b (18) He wants to worship Him - before representing Him in the public square, Gideon needed to know him in a personal way.

1. Too many try to skip this step (straight to leadership position, w/o their proving).
2. God’s warriors must be w/Him in worship before they can be w/Him in warfare.

V. Slide15 2 ALTARS (24-32)

A. Gideon’s Altar - Peace/Yahweh Shalom

B. God’s Altar - Sovereignty/over lil gods

1. You wanted a sign from Me...now I want one from you.
2. Gideon was called to deliver Israel from the Midianites, but 1st, he must make a stand for God in his own house.
3. Does this have anything to do with your Christian service? Begin at home?
   a) Like in Mk.5:18,19 As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon possessed begged to go with him. But Jesus said, No, go home to your family, and tell them everything the Lord has done for you and how merciful he has been.
4. Starting at home is often hardest...*oh, not dad’s shrine? They know us best.*

C. Slide16 What were altars for in the OT? *Sacrifices, gifts* that were brought to be consumed by fire, as a wonderful aroma in the nostrils of God.

1. Slide17a Altars ultimately were for altering. Ps.26:6,7 I will wash my hands in innocence; So I will go about Your altar, O LORD, That I may proclaim with the voice of thanksgiving, And tell of all Your wondrous works.
   a) Slide17b Alter your heart from guilt to innocence.
   b) Alter your mouth to give thanks, even for things that didn’t go your way.
   c) Alter your thoughts from blaming God, to telling others of His wondrous workings in your life.

2. What needs altering in your life today? Do you need your heart softened, so as to reflect God’s heart? Do you need a live coal w/the tongs from God’s altar, for your lips/speech? Do you need the mind of Christ, so you can bring your thoughts captive?

D. Slide17c (22) Seeing God face to face filled Gideon with a sense of unworthiness.

1. Realizing our inadequacy & insufficiency prepare’s us to be God’s warriors.

E. (27) Gideon means hewer or hacker (cut down).

F. (28) Notice when the men of the city find it? early in the morning.

1. The worshippers of Baal never neglect their daily devotions. convicting.

VI. Slide18 2 EMPOWERMENTS (33-35)

A. The Spirit of the Lord Came - Invisible/Anointing

B. The people Came - Visible/Encouraging


1. This name was a reminder to Gideon of his victory over Baal, because Baal could not conqueror Gideon.

VII. Slide19 2 SIGNS (36-40)

A. Fleece Wet & Fleece Dry

B. Is Gideon’s fleece an acceptable way for you & I to discern God’s will for our life?
1. Remember, Gideon already knew what God wanted him to do; he simply struggled with fear & doubt.

2. So Gideon’s test was not about determining God’s will but about finding the courage to do God’s will.
   a) God graciously accommodated his weak faith of His warrior.

3. Let’s remember, God has given us His Word & His Spirit to tell us what His will is (something Gideon didn’t have, like we do). And, where Scripture & the Spirit seem silent, it is enough to know His character...that He will be faithful to direct our steps in His sovereign time. We don’t need further assurance than this.

C. So what did the fire coming down from heaven teach Gideon? Oh, God is with us/Immanuel.

D. So what did the protection against all the men of the city teach Gideon? Oh, God has not forsaken us & delivered us into the hands of our enemy. Look, how he delivered me from these local enemies.

E. So what did the double fleece sign teach Gideon? Oh, God still does do miracles.