

Timid Warrior
February 5, 2017
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Judges 6:11-16, 25-32

- **Why are we drawn to the underdog? What makes the underdog so appealing? Why does God like to use underdogs?**
- Judges chapter six introduces us to a farmer named Gideon. God chose to use Gideon to lead Israel to victory over their enemies, the Midianites.
- Gideon saw himself as the least qualified person for the job, an underdog.
- God saw Gideon not for who he was (the “least” of the least), but for who God would equip him to be (a “mighty man of valor”).

Big idea in three statements:

1. God grows us by giving us tasks we can only do in His strength.
 2. If the task is from God, He will enable us to do more than we think we can.
 3. Because, when God gives us a job, He always gives us the power to do it.
- This story starts in a familiar way. If you’ve been here the past three weeks you’ll recognize how this all begins.
 - 5:31: *“And the land had rest for forty years.”*
 - Next verse (6:1): *“The people did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord gave them into the hand of Midian seven years.”*
 - The Midianites were a marauding band of terrorists descended from Moses’ second marriage. They hated the Israelites.
 - For seven years God allowed the Midianites to terrorize Israel as punishment for Israel’s disobedience and idolatry.
 - They “pillaged every village, scavenged the land, ...ruined all the Israelites’ crops and rustled all their livestock.”¹
 - 6:4 tells us: They left the Israelites with nothing to eat, taking all the sheep, goats, cattle, and donkeys. ⁵ These enemy hordes... were as thick as locusts; they arrived on droves of camels too

- numerous to count --- they stayed until the land was stripped bare.²
- The Israelites cried to God to save them from the Midianites.
 - God sent a prophet to call them out on their sin of worshipping false gods. The Israelites refused to repent, so the terror continued.
 - The Israelites had to resort to unusual methods to try to harvest crops while expecting a Midianite terrorist attack at any moment.
 - We find a young farmer named Gideon threshing wheat in a winepress.
 - Threshing wheat was a method of separating the grain from the husks. They would use sticks to pound the wheat, then a winnowing fork to throw it into the air. The straw would blow away and the grain would fall to the ground. They normally did this on a flat floor on top of a hill so they got maximum wind to blow away the straw/chaff.
 - It was terror alert orange because of the Midianites, so Gideon is hiding out and doing the threshing down in an enclosed winepress. Literally, a vat in which grapes were crushed.
 - An angel of the Lord appears out of nowhere to Gideon.

Judges 6:12–16 (NLT)

¹² The angel of the Lord appeared to him and said, “Mighty hero, the Lord is with you!”

¹³ “Sir,” Gideon replied, “if the Lord is with us, why has all this happened to us? And where are all the miracles our ancestors told us about? Didn’t they say, ‘The Lord brought us up out of Egypt’? But now the Lord has abandoned us and handed us over to the Midianites.”

¹⁴ Then the Lord turned to him and said, “Go with the strength you have, and rescue Israel from the Midianites. I am sending you!”

¹⁵ “But Lord,” Gideon replied, “how can I rescue Israel? My clan is the weakest in the whole tribe of Manasseh, and I am the least in my entire family!”

¹⁶ The Lord said to him, “I will be with you. And you will destroy the Midianites as if you were fighting against one man.”

- Verse 12: When the angel addressed him as a “mighty hero” or “man of valor” Gideon probably looked around for someone

else. **What else did the angel say that justified that description of Gideon?**

- It's amazing what you can accomplish when *"the Lord is with you!"* On the other hand, good luck if He's not. Luke 18:27, Jesus said: *"What is impossible with man is possible with God."*³
- Verse 13, look at Gideon's response: **When we're in trouble how do we often respond?** Gideon said, *"...the Lord has abandoned us."* **What did he conveniently leave out of his response?**
- When we find ourselves in a mess we tend to have a "blind spot" about how we got there. Many of our problems are "self-inflicted" due to disobedience to God. Often, we refuse to take ownership of our mess!
- Verse 14: **Why did the angel say Gideon could do this job?**
- If you expect God's power, make sure the call is from God and not you!
- Gideon protested: *"My family is the weakest tribe and I'm the baby boy."*
- Often when we're asked to do something we beg off by saying, *"someone else would be more qualified,"* because we don't want to seem proud or pushy. **Do you think Gideon was just being humble or did he really feel like he was the least equipped for this task? Why?**
- In our society people never want to be perceived as weak! **What does the Bible tell us about how God deals with our weaknesses?**

1 Corinthians 1:26–29 (NLT)

²⁶ Remember, dear brothers and sisters, that few of you were wise in the world's eyes or powerful or wealthy* when God called you.

²⁷ Instead, God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. And he chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful. ²⁸ God chose things despised by the world,* things counted as nothing at all, and used them to bring to nothing what the world considers important. ²⁹ As a result, no one can ever boast in the presence of God.

- It's okay to feel inadequate when God calls us to a task, as long as we remember He is the source of everything we need to do His will.
- Over-confidence in our own abilities will get us into trouble.
- Lack of confidence that God will equip us to do what He has called us to do could rob us of the blessing of being used by Him.
- Wouldn't it be sad to get to the end of life and wonder what you could have done for God if you hadn't been so afraid? It's okay to feel inadequate as long as we remember that God will strengthen us.
- Gideon didn't just have a confidence problem. He and his family had a sin problem to deal with.

Judges 6:25–32 (NLT)

²⁵ That night the Lord said to Gideon, “Take the second bull from your father’s herd, the one that is seven years old. Pull down your father’s altar to Baal, and cut down the Asherah pole standing beside it.

²⁶ Then build an altar to the Lord your God here on this hilltop sanctuary, laying the stones carefully. Sacrifice the bull as a burnt offering on the altar, using as fuel the wood of the Asherah pole you cut down.”

²⁷ So Gideon took ten of his servants and did as the Lord had commanded. But he did it at night because he was afraid of the other members of his father’s household and the people of the town.

- Before we can accomplish God’s mission, we sometimes need to clean up some sin in our own backyard. In this case, Gideon’s father literally had altar and a “totem pole” to the false god Baal in their backyard.
- They wondered why God wasn’t rescuing them and they had the altar to the false god Baal on their own property!
- Gideon did what God directed and destroyed the altar and the totem pole and turned it into an altar to the ONE TRUE GOD. As he feared, the next morning the people of the town were furious and wanted to kill him.
- Even though Gideon’s father Joash was guilty of hosting idol worship, he defended his son to the townspeople.
- He said, *“If Baal is a real god let him defend himself! Leave my boy alone!”*

- Had Joash repented or was this a dad defending his son? Who knows?
- What's important is that Gideon went from cowering in a winepress, to being courageous enough to confront the sin of the townspeople.
- That was just the beginning of how God would use Gideon. You know the rest of his story. Gideon and his small army of 300 defeated the enormous Midianite army. Gideon became Israel's fifth judge in this period. He is mentioned in Hebrews 11's "Hall of Faith" as a mighty man of God.
- Most importantly, "...though slow to be convinced, (Gideon) acted on his convictions"⁴ and led God's people to restoration and peace.

So, What's the Takeaway?

As we stated at the beginning:

- God grows us by stretching us; by giving us tasks we can only do in His strength.
- If the task is from God, He will enable us to do more than we think we can.
- That's because when God gives us a job, He always gives us the power to do it.
- It's okay to feel inadequate when God calls us to a task, as long as we remember He is the source of everything we need to do His will.
- Has God called you to a task for which you feel inadequate? Maybe you're giving Him lots of reasons why you are not up to the task.
- Instead, ask Him to make it clear what He wants you to do and to give you the courage, wisdom, and strength you need to accomplish it. Then move out trusting Him to turn you from a weakling in a winepress to a "mighty hero" for His glory!

¹ Anders, Max; Phillips, W. Gary. Holman Old Testament Commentary - Judges, Ruth (Kindle Locations 2133-2135). B&H Publishing. Kindle Edition.

² Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Jdg 6:3–5). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

³ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. (2016). (Lk 18:27). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

⁴ Tyndale. Life Application Study Bible NKJV (LASB: Full Size) (Kindle Locations 128531-128535). Tyndale House Publishers. Kindle Edition.