

Gideon's faith in God's ability

Faith...

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good testimony. By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible...”

- Hebrews 11: 1-3

Long list of unlikely heroes of faith

“And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again.”

-Hebrews 11:32-35

Long list of unlikely heroes of faith

- Israel had turned from God
- God called someone to have faith in Him and lead the nation back to freedom and faith
- In their humanity, they answered the call
- In their humanity, they were all flawed and needed Him
- Through their faith great things are accomplished
- But there were consequences for their humanity and a missed opportunity for the nation

Gideon's the guy...

- Judges 6 – 9
- Early in Israel's history
- People turned their back on God
- And so He let them suffer to cause them to seek His help and deliverance

Judges 6: 1-6

“The Israelites did evil in the Lord’s sight. So the Lord handed them over to the Midianites for seven years. The Midianites were so cruel that the Israelites made hiding places for themselves in the mountains, caves, and strongholds. Whenever the Israelites planted their crops, marauders from Midian, Amalek, and the people of the east would attack Israel, camping in the land and destroying crops as far away as Gaza. They left the Israelites with nothing to eat, taking all the sheep, goats, cattle, and donkeys. These enemy hordes, coming with their livestock and tents, were as thick as locusts; they arrived on droves of camels too numerous to count. And they stayed until the land was stripped bare. So Israel was reduced to starvation by the Midianites. Then the Israelites cried out to the Lord for help.”

The Lord hears and answers

- An angel sits under a terebinth tree



An unlikely hero is nearby

- Gideon is threshing wheat in the bottom of a barrel in order to hide it from the enemy

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- The angel calls Gideon a “mighty hero” and says The LORD is with him
- “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?”

A dialogue many of us can relate to...

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

“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!”

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

Gideon replied, “If you are truly going to help me, show me a sign to prove that it is really the Lord speaking to me. Don’t go away until I come back and bring my offering to you.”

He answered, “I will stay here until you return.”

A need to know...

- We are really hearing The LORD
- The LORD is going to be with us
- We understand correctly what He wants
- We understand correctly what we need to do

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And so God confirms things to Gideon

- Through this sacrifice Gideon offers
- Through the tearing down of the altar to Baal and the Asherah pole
- Through the people who are angry
 - When we begin to listen to voice of God, there will be those who are not listening who will be angry
 - But Gideon, by faith, believes that what God asks of him matters more

And Gideon's faith grows...

“But Joash shouted to the mob that confronted him, “Why are you defending Baal? Will you argue his case? Whoever pleads his case will be put to death by morning! If Baal truly is a god, let him defend himself and destroy the one who broke down his altar!” From then on Gideon was called Jerub-baal, which means “Let Baal defend himself,” because he broke down Baal’s altar.”

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- AW Tozer: “You are as holy as you want to be...”

And responding in faith leads to more

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- Gideon is sanctified – set apart by The LORD

“Then the Spirit of the Lord took possession of Gideon. He blew a ram’s horn as a call to arms, and the men of the clan of Abiezer came to him. He also sent messengers throughout Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, summoning their warriors, and all of them responded.”

But Gideon is still Gideon

- And The LORD is still The LORD
 - Who searches and knows us
 - And He knows what Gideon needs

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- And The LORD is still The LORD
 - Who searches and knows us
 - And He knows what Gideon needs
- Gideon asks for confirmation
- And then he asks again
 - We can let our fears immobilize us
 - We can let our willingness lead us into moving ahead of God or doing things in our own strength

Look at the transformation!

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“The Lord said to Gideon, “You have too many warriors with you. If I let all of you fight the Midianites, the Israelites will boast to me that they saved themselves by their own strength. Therefore, tell the people, ‘Whoever is timid or afraid may leave this mountain and go home.’” So 22,000 of them went home, leaving only 10,000 who were willing to fight.”

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- As soon as God empowers us to do something, we want to take the credit!
- Look at all the people He's raised up to lead
 - Ministries which elevate their name
 - “Branding” which furthers careers instead of the cause of Christ
 - What is beneficial to self-preservation begins to take precedence over what is best for The Kingdom

But Gideon's heart stays humble

- And God whittles away what is unnecessary

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“But the Lord told Gideon, “There are still too many! Bring them down to the spring, and I will test them to determine who will go with you and who will not.”

From 10K to 300

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“The Lord told Gideon, “With these 300 men I will rescue you and give you victory over the Midianites. Send all the others home.” So Gideon collected the provisions and rams' horns of the other warriors and sent them home. But he kept the 300 men with him...”

And Gideon is still Gideon...
and The LORD is still kind to him

“The Midianite camp was in the valley just below Gideon. That night the Lord said, “Get up! Go down into the Midianite camp, for I have given you victory over them! But if you are afraid to attack, go down to the camp with your servant Purah. Listen to what the Midianites are saying, and you will be greatly encouraged. Then you will be eager to attack.”

So Gideon learns some things...

“So Gideon took Purah and went down to the edge of the enemy camp. The armies of Midian, Amalek, and the people of the east had settled in the valley like a swarm of locusts. Their camels were like grains of sand on the seashore—too many to count. Gideon crept up just as a man was telling his companion about a dream. The man said, “I had this dream, and in my dream a loaf of barley bread came tumbling down into the Midianite camp. It hit a tent, turned it over, and knocked it flat!”

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So Gideon learns some things...

“When Gideon heard the dream and its interpretation, he bowed in worship before the Lord. Then he returned to the Israelite camp and shouted, “Get up! For the Lord has given you victory over the Midianite hordes!”

He divided the 300 men into three groups and gave each man a ram’s horn and a clay jar with a torch in it.”

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- 300 men against an innumerable army
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 - Modern day equivalent of a whistle and a flashlight

And so it goes...

“Then he said to them, “Keep your eyes on me. When I come to the edge of the camp, do just as I do. As soon as I and those with me blow the rams’ horns, blow your horns, too, all around the entire camp, and shout, ‘For the Lord and for Gideon!’”

It was just after midnight, after the changing of the guard, when Gideon and the 100 men with him reached the edge of the Midianite camp. Suddenly, they blew the rams’ horns and broke their clay jars. Then all three groups blew their horns and broke their jars. They held the blazing torches in their left hands and the horns in their right hands, and they all shouted, “A sword for the Lord and for Gideon!”

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- **It was the power of The LORD combining with the leadership and following of faithful people that causes the destruction of the enemy**

The enemy falls and retreats

“Each man stood at his position around the camp and watched as all the Midianites rushed around in a panic, shouting as they ran to escape. When the 300 Israelites blew their rams’ horns, the Lord caused the warriors in the camp to fight against each other with their swords. Those who were not killed fled to places as far away as Beth-shittah near Zererah and to the border of Abel-meholah near Tabbath.”

Everyone gets in on the action...

- Gideon calls upon those 32,000 to clean up the rest
- There is dissention to deal with
- There are disputes to settle
- But eventually, they seek Gideon to rule them
- Gideon replies that The LORD, not Gideon will rule over them, but he will lead them

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- Gideon asks for part of the spoils of battle
 - The gold earrings from the enemy
 - He makes an ephod out of it

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- Gideon asks for part of the spoils of battle
 - The gold earrings from the enemy
 - He makes an ephod out of it
- But it becomes an idol to the people
 - When they look at it, they don't see what The Lord did for them
 - They see what they did through Gideon's leadership for The LORD
 - And it becomes their idol

So what does this mean for us?

- The Word is accurate and historically correct
- The Word is also alive and a light for our feet
- The Word is a lamp for our path

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- And it must also be humble awareness that He is doing it through us

The plaque on the wall says...



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The plaque on the wall says...



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Look at what Jesus has done in this place!

The words on the stone say...



The words on the stone say...



Look at what Jesus did in me...