

07-06-01-The Call of Gideon

fear of man, trials, calling, spiritual warfare, divine strength

Jud.6:11-16

Our weakness can be a vessel for God's glory.

INTRODUCTION:

–**Judges 6:11-16 (NIV)**, ¹¹*The angel of the LORD came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites.* ¹²*When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said, “The LORD is with you, mighty warrior.”* ¹³*“But sir,” Gideon replied, “if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our fathers told us about when they said, ‘Did not the LORD bring us up out of Egypt?’ But now the LORD has abandoned us and put us into the hand of Midian.”* ¹⁴*The LORD turned to him and said, “Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian’s hand. Am I not sending you?”* ¹⁵*“But Lord,” Gideon asked, “how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family.”* ¹⁶*The LORD answered, “I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites together.”* **HOM.idea.**

–**Israel’s pattern in Judges**: 1) *Israel sinned* by serving false Canaanite gods; 2) *Israel oppressed* by the Canaanites; 3) *Israel cried to the Lord* and He delivered them. **God sent a prophet to remind from of this cycle in Judges 6:7-10**, When the Israelites cried to the LORD because of Midian, he sent them a prophet, who said, “This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I brought you up out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. I snatched you from the power of Egypt and from the hand of all your oppressors. I drove them from before you and gave you their land. I said to you, ‘I am the LORD your God; do not worship the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you live.’ But you have not listened to me.”

–**Our world still has false gods: fame, fortune, fashion, fleshly fantasies.** **If we bow to them**, the same *self-inflicted judgment* follows: our lives are drained of *strong faith, spiritual force, and holy fruit*. Then, if **we cry out to God in our weakness**, and *He shows up* [**“angel of the Lord”** in the OT often manifests God, because He’s identified as speaking], **and He says**:

- I. **“The Lord Is With You!”**– **v.12**, *When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said, “The LORD is with you, mighty warrior.”*
 - A. **God’s pattern is incarnational**: *“The angel of the LORD came and sat down”* (God **comes down** to speak, to instruct, to guide, to save...)
 - B. He **comes down** to where *we’re hiding*: (in this case) *“where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites.”*
(**The fear of man** causes us to do things we really don’t want to do:

“People will see me. What will they think? or What will they say?)

- C. He comes down to tell us the truth: “The LORD is with you, mighty warrior.” (God sees and treats us, according to our true potential!)

TRANS: [When God told Moses to lead Israel out of Egypt, Moses said, “Not me, Lord! I can’t speak well. Send another guy.”] Have you ever made excuses to God? I have, and so did Gideon, by questioning God’s statement:

II. “Then, why has all this happened to us?”— v.13a, “But sir,” Gideon replied, “if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our fathers told us about...?”

- A. By the prophet God sent, those questions were already answered. (God’s Word already replies to many of life’s questions, but we must look for them, and learn from them, and live by them.)
- B. “Where are all his wonders that our fathers told us about...?” (Focusing on past miracles can distract us from the new ones God has for us!)
- C. And like Gideon, we can let our feelings distract us from the facts:
1. The fact is, sin brings suffering (either by our own Satan-led sins [deceit, selfishness, unforgiveness] OR by the sins of others that harm us, even when we’re upholding truth and following God.)
 2. Our feelings say, “God has abandoned us!” (But God knows the truth and sees beyond our expressions of discouragement.)

TRANS: He didn’t argue with Gideon. He doesn’t come down to settle our emotional tirades, but to enlist us in His service. He tells Gideon:

III. “Go in the strength you have... Am I not sending you?” (v.14)

- A. Our weakness can be a vessel for God’s glory. (In fact, God’s will isn’t accomplished by those who rely on their own strength.)
- B. God chose Gideon, because he confessed, “I’m a zero, a nobody!”
– in v.15, Gideon again talks back at God:
1. “How can I save Israel? [I can barely save my wheat from the Midianites.]” (Translated for us: “How can I serve You? I barely go through the day without falling into all sorts of temptations!”)
 2. “My clan is the weakest in Manasseh” (Translated for us: “I have no background,” or, “I had a dysfunctional upbringing.”)
 3. “I am the least in my family” (Translated for us: “I’m low man on the totem pole. Use somebody higher up, somebody with more skills

or more strength or more talent.”)

- C. God’s replies in v.16 is “I will be with you”— and what will happen?
1. “you will strike down...” (For victory over our spiritual enemies, God wants our involvement: “you will,”, your will, your choices....)
 2. “all the Midianites together” [NKJV, “as one man”]. [We’re like boxers in a ring, fighting sinful tendencies. But God joins with us, helping us to give temptation a knock-out punch “as one man,” just as if we were one boxer.]

CONCLUSION:

–God calls us to grow spiritually in the midst of physical, relational and situational trials and temptations, when we feel weak and inadequate. If that describes us, then that’s just what He’s looking for! He delights to use lives where His power can work and His glory can shine. Our weakness can be a vessel for God’s glory.