

Gideon

Gideon is one of the Old Testament characters which I believe many of us can see some of ourselves in. He was an ordinary man who God called to step outside his comfort zone and do something out of the ordinary.

God will often try to make us step outside our comfort zone, because He wants us to learn to trust Him. God has a great plan for your life, because He has given the Great Commission to each and every one of us.

Gideon was living in a time when Israel did not have a king, and this period was characterized by many ups and downs. They would fall into sin, and God would judge them. God would raise up judges to bring the people back to him, and then Israel would prosper again. This went on and on, and Gideon was one of these judges. When Gideon entered the stage, the Bible says the following:

Judges 6:1-2

And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord: and the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years. And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel:

So the people were living in sin, and therefore God had allowed the Midianites to prevail against them. But when we get off course, God is merciful and will always try to get us back.

So God needed to raise up a leader who could lead the people again and bring them to victory. We would most likely try to find the biggest and the strongest, but God doesn't look at the same things as we do - because He is not limited by our weakness.

1. Samuel 16:7

But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

God usually uses ordinary people to do great things. He is not looking for people's strengths but for their obedience.

1. Samuel 15:22

But Samuel replied: "Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams."

So when God was looking for someone to lead Israel again, He found Gideon, but even Gideon was sure that the Lord must have made a mistake.

Judges 6:11-16

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. When the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, he said, "The Lord is with you, mighty warrior." "Pardon me, my lord," Gideon replied, "but if the Lord is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our ancestors told us about when they said, 'Did not the Lord bring us up out of Egypt?' But now the Lord has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midian." 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?" "Pardon me, my lord," Gideon replied, "but how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family." The Lord answered, "I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites, leaving none alive."

Just like so many of us Gideon did not look at himself as a great man, but still we see that God was calling him a mighty warrior.

God does not look at us as weak, because He looks at us from what He can make of us. God knew that even though Gideon was from the weakest clan and the least in his family, He could make a mighty warrior out of him. When God looks at you, He does not look at your current weakness, but on the potential He has given you.

Gideon goes to work

Tearing down the altars

The first thing God asks Gideon to do was to tear down the altar to Baal that his family had.

Judges 6:25-26

That same night the Lord said to him, "Take the second bull from your father's herd, the one seven years old. Tear down your father's altar to Baal and cut down the Asherah pole beside it. Then build a proper kind of altar to the Lord your God on the top of this height. Using the wood of the Asherah pole that you cut down, offer the second bull as a burnt offering."

God wanted to use Gideon, but before He could use him there were some things in his life that needed to be dealt with. It is the same in our lives. God wants to use us, but we need to be willing to tear down the things in our lives that do not please Him.

The Spirit of the Lord came upon him

The next thing that happened was that Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and this is something we read about in many of the men through whom God did great things.

Judges 6:34

Then the Spirit of the Lord came on Gideon, and he blew a trumpet, summoning the Abiezrites to follow him.

God did not plan on using Gideon's power to rescue Israel, so if Gideon was going to do something for God, it would have to be in the power of the Spirit.

Too often we think that God wants to use us because we're so good, but that is never the case. God wants to use us as vessels HE can work through.

Gideon gathers too many people

Gideon had the same problem as so many of us have. We want to do everything in a safe way, but God wants us to learn to trust Him.

Gideon gathers too many people, so God actually has to ask him to send many of them home. Why? Because God wanted to make sure that HE would get the glory.

Judges 7:2

The Lord said to Gideon, "You have too many men. I cannot deliver Midian into their hands, or Israel would boast against me, 'My own strength has saved me.'

Often we think we are safe because we have figured everything out, but we are really not safe until we learn to trust in God.

Proverbs 3:5-7

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil.

Do something

Gideon had prepared, he had done as the Lord had said and now came the next step - and this step is a very important one. Gideon had to attack.

People will not remember you for what you said you would do, but for what you actually did. You can plan and prepare as long as you want, but unless you get to the point where you start to act on the plans and ideas God has given you nothing will happen.

Judges 7:15

When Gideon heard the dream and its interpretation, he bowed down and worshiped. He returned to the camp of Israel and called out, "Get up! The Lord has given the Midianite camp into your hands."

If you have done your job in preparing, there comes a time where you will have to tell yourself "Get up, and get moving!"

Martin Luther did not like the Epistle of James because at first glance it might seem like he did not believe in salvation by grace. But James is not talking about getting saved by works. He was just saying that where there is faith, there will always be some works. Not because we are saved by the works, but because faith produces works.

James 2:26

As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.