

Title: "Gideon: Courageous in Calling"

Theme: Honor Begins At Home

Focal Scripture: Judges 6:11-16; 7:2-22

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Place: DCOG

Big Idea: I must begin to see myself through the eyes of God.

I. CONFESSION: " I sometimes doubt that God can truly use someone like me."

* Just before Easter I went out with some friends and did something frightening. After years of physical limitations, of almost getting to the point where I needed a cane to walk, I went out and played nine holes of golf. I probably haven't played for five years and I wasn't that good before. I was ill equipped for the task.

‡ Have you ever felt worthless?

* Not too long ago I needed to replace my license plates on my two cars. I was trying to keep them separate so that I would place the right plate on the right car. So I got my screw driver and took off the plate on my newer car and replaced it with the new license plate. So far so good!

Next, I went to work on my older car. The first screw was tight but I was able to remove it. Then I went to work on the second screw. You guessed it. It would not budge. I pressed so hard that the car was moving forward. I couldn't find the WD-40 so I sprayed it with carberator cleaner, glass cleaner, and anything else I could find. No luck!

I worked on that screw for two hours. Since I was now chewing up the screw I decided I needed a professional screw remover. I called a local business and set up an appointment.

Now, Deb Burke heard about my actions, and declared that I would not pay somebody for that and she immediately volunteered Dave.

Dave came by my house, and in a matter of minutes had the screw out and the plate replaced. About 15 minutes from his house, replace the plate, and get home again.

To top it all off, he didn't even have the decency to make up a story about how hard it was. I felt like an idiot.

Anybody else ever been there?

II. QUESTION: “Do you ever get the sense that you are simply unqualified?”

- A. “Some of you feel as if you aren't the dad/parent that your children need,”
- B. “Some of you feel like you don't know how to make a difference in the job you have,”
- C. “Some of you feel called to serve in this church but are worried you don't measure up,”

* “Did you know that many men and women in the Bible felt the same way you and I do? One such man was Gideon, whose story we find in the Book of Judges.”

III. CONNECTION: *Judges 6:11-16; 7:2-22*

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. ¹²When 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."

Judges 7:2-22

The LORD said to Gideon, "You have too many men for me to deliver Midian into their hands. In order that Israel may not boast against me that her own strength has saved her,

*3*announce now to the people, 'Anyone who trembles with fear may turn back and leave Mount Gilead.' " So twenty-two thousand men left, while ten thousand remained.

*4*But the LORD said to Gideon, "There are still too many men. Take them down to the water, and I will sift them for you there. If I say, 'This one shall go with you,' he shall go; but if I say, 'This one shall not go with you,' he shall not go."

*5*So Gideon took the men down to the water. There the LORD told him, "Separate those who lap the water with their tongues like a dog from those who kneel down to drink." *6*Three hundred men lapped with their hands to their mouths. All the rest got down on their knees to drink.

*7*The LORD said to Gideon, "With the three hundred men that lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hands. Let all the other men go, each to his own place." *8*So Gideon sent the rest of the Israelites to their tents but kept the three hundred, who took over the provisions and trumpets of the others.

Now the camp of Midian lay below him in the valley.

*9*During that night the LORD said to Gideon, "Get up, go down against the camp, because I am going to give it into your hands.

*10*If you are afraid to attack, go down to the camp with your

servant Purah ¹¹and listen to what they are saying. Afterward, you will be encouraged to attack the camp." So he and Purah his servant went down to the outposts of the camp. ¹²The Midianites, the Amalekites and all the other eastern peoples had settled in the valley, thick as locusts. Their camels could no more be counted than the sand on the seashore.

¹³Gideon arrived just as a man was telling a friend his dream. "I had a dream," he was saying. "A round loaf of barley bread came tumbling into the Midianite camp. It struck the tent with such force that the tent overturned and collapsed."

¹⁴His friend responded, "This can be nothing other than the sword of Gideon son of Joash, the Israelite. God has given the Midianites and the whole camp into his hands."

¹⁵When Gideon heard the dream and its interpretation, he worshiped God. He returned to the camp of Israel and called out, "Get up! The LORD has given the Midianite camp into your hands." ¹⁶Dividing the three hundred men into three companies, he placed trumpets and empty jars in the hands of all of them, with torches inside.

¹⁷"Watch me," he told them. "Follow my lead. When I get to the edge of the camp, do exactly as I do. ¹⁸When I and all who are with me blow our trumpets, then from all around the camp blow yours and shout, 'For the LORD and for Gideon.' "

¹⁹Gideon and the hundred men with him reached the edge of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, just after they had changed the guard. They blew their trumpets and broke the jars that were in their hands. ²⁰The three companies blew the trumpets and smashed the jars. Grasping the torches in their left hands and holding in their right hands the trumpets they were to blow, they shouted, "A sword for the LORD and for Gideon!" ²¹While each man held his position around the camp, all the Midianites ran, crying out as they fled.

²²When the three hundred trumpets sounded, the LORD caused the men throughout the camp to turn on each other with

their swords. The army fled to Beth Shittah toward Zererah as far as the border of Abel Meholah near Tabbath.

- A. Gideon needed God's perspective. God saw more in Gideon than Gideon saw in himself.
 - a. As Gideon hid from the Midianites in the wine press while he beat out the wheat, an angel appeared and called him "mighty warrior" (6:12).
 - b. In his frightened state, Gideon focused on his inability due to his lackluster family (see 6:15).
 - c. Gideon needed to follow the first time. Laying out the fleece is not an example to repeat.
 - d. Gideon's lack of faith required extra signs when God's commands for removal of idols had already been stated (see 6:17-24; 6:36-40).

- B. To be courageous, we shouldn't need extra signs on issues that God has already made clear.
 - a. Gideon needed to get rid of competing gods. You cannot follow God with false gods in the way.
 - b. Before the fight of Gideon's life, God wanted to remove the gods from the thrones in his children's hearts.
 - c. God knows that if we have other gods reigning over our lives, we will never be able to truly follow His calling.

- C. Gideon received progressive assignments. Before Gideon could serve as a military commander, he needed to prove his valiant-warrior status by being courageous in his hometown.
 - a. While he did take down the idol under cover of darkness, he experienced opposition when the truth came out (see 6:28-35).

- D. Gideon plus God equals a majority.
 - a. God sifted the army from 32,000 to 300 men.

- b. Fewer than 10 percent were still there after these two tests. First, Gideon asked for anyone fearful to leave the army (see 7:2-3).
- c. Second, Gideon kept the men who lapped the water with their hands to drink (see 7:4-8).
 - 1. Most scholars believe these were the men staying alert to the approaching enemy.
- d. Even with this small group, God won the victory (see 7:19-23).
- e. Gideon finally believed God was able to do what He said He could do.

E. Gideon became courageous in calling.

IV. APPLICATION

* Ten months ago our then youth pastor resigned and left us in a two-week window. What were we going to do? Along with prayer we talked with our youth leaders and four of them were given leadership assignments. Bart Lehman, Pam Mitchel, Aubris Taylor, and Lucie Ordway were asked to take on some large but significant tasks.

I'm sure there were times when they wondered if they were spiritually prepared, physically able, and emotionally energized. They, however, trusted God and courageously accepted that call. And God blessed.

“Like Gideon, we all have reasons to be fearful if we focus on our own abilities, but if we focus on the One who called us, we know He will be faithful. We too can respond courageously.”

Conclusion: Think of terms you might use to describe your spiritual walk (*inconsistent, fearful, all talk but no action*, etc.). Remember that while you may perceive yourself to be fearful or inadequate, God sees you as a valiant warrior.

If you doubt that God can use you, I suggest that you confess to God those things you fear and to commit to trust God at His word.

It is time that we move from being incompetent and lethargic and become a courageous people. Honor begins at home and folks this is our home. Are you ready to accept your role as a valiant warrior?