

Introduction:

- When you think of a hero, you're usually inclined to think of strength, great intellect, personal charisma and beauty, or enormous wealth. But our hero today had none of these. Most heroes start in weakness. He started out as a bitter and weak farmer, but was transformed into a warrior in a most unlikely fashion. God spoke to me in a dream Friday night and said, "I want warriors!"
- What was it like to become the man that God used to free Israel from their enemies? What changes did God bring into his life, and what struggles did he face in his journey to becoming a hero of God?
- Gideon a Picture of Weakness, Gideon a Picture of Transformation, Gideon a Picture of Peace.

I. Gideon a Picture of Weakness

- A. Where you are located makes all the difference. Gideon was so far down he had to look up to see bottom.
1. He is at the bottom of a wine press, threshing wheat. It what some would call: Winepress living in a Midianite World. Judges 6:11. Gideon is living in fear from the Midianites so in fear he hides in a wine press to thresh wheat. Threshing is to be done in the open so that you can maximize the use of the wind in separating wheat from chaff. He is down in a wine press so that he is not seen by Midianites while he is threshing. Gideon and all Israel are in fear and in hiding. What are you fearful of? What are you hiding from?
 2. He is at the bottom of his faith. vs 13-14
 - a) If the Lord is with us then why...?
 - (1) "Why?" is not the right question to be asking God.
 - (2) Why implies a victim mentality. It is focused on self and is really a self pity perspective (spirit). "Why" most usually will have to do with self/you. A better question might be, "*How am I supposed to see God in light of this situation?*"
 - (3) We have to get out of the victim mentality if we are to ever achieve a place of walking victoriously in the power of the Spirit. Asking the right questions therefore is of the utmost importance.
 - b) Where are all the miracles that our ancestors have talked about?
 - c) The Lord has abandoned us. We have the tendency to think this way when things are hard, or we seem to be losing.
 3. He is at the bottom of his identity. Runt mentality.
 - a) I am from the smallest tribe. Confession of weakness!
 - b) I am from the littlest clan/family in this smallest tribe. Confession of weakness!
 - c) I am the littlest of my entire family! Confession of weakness! Everything is against me, what good am I anyway?"
 - d) Being little does not mean you have to be weak. What contributed to Israel's weakness?
- B. Sin is a major contributor to our weakness. It is an underlying premise in judges. Israel sins, trouble comes, they cry out, God hears and sends a deliverer, life is good they start sinning again.
1. Judges 6:1 Israel did evil in the Lords sight. SO the Lord handed them over to the Midianites. When you get handed over by God you do not get back until you have a change of heart.
 2. Judges 6:10 "*I brought, ...I rescued, ...I drove out, ...I told you who I was, ...BUT YOU HAVE NOT LISTENED.*" God is looking for warriors not wimps. Notice: in weakness Gideon was chose by God. Gideon was Gods' chosen warrior.
- C. A warrior is a person who fights in battles and is known for having courage and skill.
1. God desires us all to be warriors. Warriors start from a place of weakness.
 2. It is the transformation that makes a warrior.

II. Gideon a Picture of Transformation

- A. " *Your assumptions, if they're wrong, can define you in a negative way. But your assumptions, if they're in Christ and are right, they can define you in ways that you wouldn't believe. It's really important for us to check out what we are thinking.*" Graham Cooke
1. We have to be taught to think like Christ. It does not come naturally.
 2. Most people are shaped by their surrounding, life experiences, and education.
 3. Therefore, transformation is required so that we think like God. It moves us from asking "Why God?" to "God what are you doing in this situation?" "What are you doing in me?"
- B. All transformation begins with two things.
1. Recognition/acknowledgment of your weakness.
 2. Revelation of God and who He is.
- C. God speaks (revelation) to Israel. He wants transformation. 6:7-10
1. They cried to the Lord and he sent a prophet. We serve a God who hears!
 2. Their response, says God. "You have not listened."
 3. Note: 1.) God was merciful to listen and respond to their cry by sending a prophet (revelation). 2.) He reminded them who He was and what He had done for them before. 3.) 'Don't worship other Gods' but you would not listen. (God is showing them their issues. He is causing them to look at what needed to be changed.
 4. God was speaking to a nation! But they would not hear.
- D. God speaks to Gideon. He wants to transform Gideon. So he must cause Gideon to see himself as he is and yet understand who he can be in God. Any time God wants to deliver a people He must find a man to lead them. IE. Family, ministry, work place, nation.
1. The angel of the Lord came and sat down and watched Gideon. God was resting. God was not nervous. God was not stressed. This is God's atmosphere! And He wants it to be Gideon's atmosphere.
 2. He calls Gideon by the way heaven sees him. vs. 12 "Mighty hero, the Lord is with you!" Heb. Gibbor - mighty man, hayil- power, wealth, strength, property. Upper class.
 3. "*Go with the strength you have and rescue Israel*" vs 14. God is challenging Gideon to take a risk. Faith risk. Start with your strength and see what God does with it.
 - a) The great thing about risk taking is that it inspire other people to do the same.
 - b) Ie. Roger Bannister the first man to break a four-minute mile. The next year over 300 people broke the four-minute mile.
 - c) God is transitioning Gideon into a place of faith.
 4. Gideon prepares a sacrifice. The angel of the Lord burns it up and then disappears. Gideon is afraid he will die not because he has seen the Lord. God is transitioning Gideon to rest on the God of the covenant! Gideon is getting stronger and stronger and doesn't even know it.
 5. "*Go tear down you fathers altar to Baal.*" God is speaking to Gideon to be confrontative. This is his father's altar. But to confront Israel's deception to believe in other Gods, he must first meet his father's Baal and pull it down. Pull down in you, Gideon. Pull it down in your family. Pull it down in your tribe. Pull it down in Israel. Do you see the pattern? 10 men go at night and destroy it!
 6. God confirms the call with a fleece. The fleece reveals God's compassion, mercy and equipping of Gideon. Once Gideon is convinced of Gods will he becomes a challenger and rouses 32,000 men to go and fight. (see 6:34 *The Spirit of the Lord took possession of Gideon!*).
 - a) God intentionally keeps Gideon and Israel weak. (Of the 32,000 only 10,000 stay; 22,000 leave because they are afraid.)

- b) God takes the 10k down to 300.
- c) Now Gideon is afraid until he goes into the camp of the Midianites and hears a dream and that they are afraid.
- E. *“quenched the flames of fire, and escaped death by the edge of the sword. Their weakness was turned to strength. They became strong in battle and put whole armies to flight.”* (Hebrews 11:34, NLT)
- F. “See how ready God is to revive the hearts of those that tremble at his word and presence, and to give those that stand in awe of his majesty assurances of his mercy.” Matt Henry
- G. God wants to transform us! The greatest thing that happens to a transformed man is PEACE!

III. Gideon a Picture of Peace

- A. Hebrew Shalom: “The general meaning behind the root *š-l-m* is of completion and fulfillment—of entering into a state of wholeness and unity, a restored relationship.” “Peace,” in this case, means much more than mere absence of war. Rather, the root meaning of the verb *šālēm* better expresses the true concept of *šālôm*. Completeness, wholeness, harmony, fulfillment, are closer to the meaning. Implicit in *šālôm* is the idea of unimpaired relationships with others and fulfillment in one’s undertakings. T.W.O.T Peace is what God desire to give the trouble hearts of men!
- B. The end of the story of Gideon is the summary. *“That is the story of how the people of Israel defeated Midian, which never recovered. Throughout the rest of Gideon’s lifetime—about forty years—there was peace in the land.”* (Judges 8:28, NLT)
- C. God introduces himself to Gideon with peace.
 1. 6:23 Don't be afraid. ‘Peace be to you.’ NKJV
 2. Gideon names the altar - Jehovah Shalom. Covenant -keeping God of peace. When Gideon says "The Lord is Peace" or Jehovah-shalom, he is saying when we are near God we are at peace. That is what God's presence meant to him. There is something to be said about staying close to God.
 3. When we find our identity in Christ, peace rules in the heart.
 4. When peace rules in the heart of a man, fear loses control.
 5. When God is seen as bigger than your problem, peace rules in the heart of man.
 6. When a nation obeys God, peace is found within her borders.

Conclusion:

- God is looking for a Gideon today - men and women of faith, who are willing to step out and do great things for God. What great things can we do for God?
 - We must guard against forgetting God and failing to teach our children. That’s why they were even in this mess. Everyone was doing what was right in their own eyes in Israel. Even Gideon had some idols to remove.
 - God can use ordinary people to do ordinary things in a great way. The steps of Gideon’s victory are easy to trace: he had a promise to believe, an altar to build, a vessel to break, a lamp to burn, and a trumpet to blow. And God gave the victory! None of these things were that incredibly difficult. But Gideon did them in obedience and God blessed him. There are so many simple things you can do that God will bless: pray, read the Bible, attend church, share your faith.
 - A small number with God can do much. Though He is not opposed to having many on His side, God loves to work through the few. You may be among the few in your company or on your ball team that has come out of the winepress to face the challenges of the open plains with the enemy nearby. Gideon and his small band of 300 men turned the tide. For the first time in 7 years, Israel had homes, and crops, and horses, and camels that were not destroyed or taken by the enemy.

- One can grow from doubt to great faith. Gideon did it.
- Leaders should be courageous and examples for others to follow. Notice how so many rallied behind someone who was so courageous. Many people won't get involved unless someone more courageous proves the way.