

Title: A Hero to Marvel at

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Gideon's story is found Judges 6, 7, & 8. We read about the climax of the story but let me tell you about him and how his example can help us.

- **Gideon had doubts.**

Gideon was unsure about himself and even with God. I think he was a lot like me and all of us. He understood that God could but wasn't quite sure that God would. Faith is believing that not only God can, but that God will do what God says. ***Faith therefor is the things that we hope for...***

Israel had once again turned away from God as they did so many times before and God allowed Midian to reign over them for 7 years. Midian treated them unjustly and oppressed them. They were abused, tortured and killed. Israel was impoverished by Midian and had nothing left. Finally, they cried out to God and God went to Gideon who had been threshing wheat in a winepress in order to hide food from the Midianites because they had been taking all the food of the Israelites.

Judges 6:12-15

When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said, "The LORD is with you, **mighty man of Velour /warrior.**"

"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." 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?" / "I am with you"

"But Lord," Gideon asked, "how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family." (How many of us made similar statements. Excuses?)

Gideon knew of God's power but doubted whether or not God would help them. After all, God didn't seem to be protecting them now. And when the angel told Gideon that God was sending Gideon, Gideon doubted this. Gideon responded by saying that he was from the smallest clan of the smallest tribe. He was a "nobody." But he was a "**nobody**" who had been rebelling against the Midianites by hiding food. Sometimes this is all that it takes, someone to stand up for what is right. Someone to speak out, someone to be available to be used of God. He is no respecter of person. Man look at the outside appearance but God looks at the heart.

So Gideon said that he still wasn't sure that this was God and asked for a sign. He would worship God and make an offering and seek a sign from God.

Gideon would have often doubt the signs that God gave him to reassure him. Gideon asked God for a sign. He said, God it's you make this fleece wet with dew in the

morning and the ground around it dry. And God did it. But Gideon still wasn't sure. He knew that there was small possibility that its by chance and he asked God to give him a second sign. This time make the ground wet with dew but make the fleece dry. And God did that too.

- **Gideon acted on faith.**

Despite his doubts he acted on what God had told him to do. God gave Gideon all kinds of signs. I already mentioned the fleece. Earlier, God burned up a broth soaked offering by having the angel touch it with his staff. A scene that is reminiscent of Elijah's confrontation with the prophets of Baal when they had to Worship and call on their God respectively. It was a "sacrifice off." Like A cook-off. A Braai but they had to call on their God to light the fire. The prophets of Baal couldn't get their god to ignite their offering while Elijah soaked his with water making it next to impossible to burn but God's holy fire consumed it the entire sacrifice and the alter. Elijah mocked them saying Baal is sleeping and unable to answer their call. Subsequently Elijah killed all of them.

God did sort of the same thing with Gideon to show Gideon that God would do what God said.

And God gave Gideon the sign that we heard about earlier. He snuck into the enemy camp where he overheard two soldiers discussing a dream that they believed was a sign that Gideon was going to destroy them.

Now you need to understand this, Gideon had raised up 35,000 men to fight against the Midian army that numbered 132,000. But God said that was too many men for Gideon and whittled the number down to 300, less than 10%. 300 against 132,000. If they lined up offering no resistance, 300 men couldn't kill 132,000 men with a sword. They couldn't lift their swords for that long. But God and Gideon invoked a panic causing the Midian army to begin killing each other. Whatever the enemy meant for harm, God will use for your favor. He fights for us, but the victory is ours. Gideon and his 300 destroyed the Midian army killing everyone all because Gideon stepped out in faith despite any lingering doubts about himself and about what God might or might not do.

- **Gideon laid it on the line.**

He wasn't willing to play it safe. 300 against the Midian army. **Suicide.** Not only that but if he failed, who would suffer? Israel. In fact, many peoples have been wiped out because their rebellion failed and the oppressing army sought to "teach a lesson."

Earlier Gideon tore down the altar to Baal in his home town and offering a sacrifice to the Lord. Except he was afraid of reprisal (retaliation) from the rest of the town and even his own family so he did it at night. The town was angry but his father stood up for him and challenged the town to let Baal fight his own battles. If Baal was real, then let Baal take out Gideon. He also told them that if the town tried to punish Gideon then they would be fighting against the Lord and the Lord would kill them all. So they let it be giving Gideon the nickname, "Jerub-Baal," which means "let Baal contend with him."

Do you have doubts? About yourself? About your abilities? I can't do that. Fill in the blank. "I can't do that because I'm..." Too young. Too old. Too busy. Too poor. Too tired. Too sick. Too young in the faith. Not trained. Too afraid. It's going to take courage to stand up and make a decision to do what God's Word says. What do you have to lose? I know what you can gain. Even so, today you can become a hero, to your family, friends etc. take out the Baal's (false gods) in your life. The things you know you not supposed to do and do what God says.

Maybe you have something hanging over you that you know isn't pleasing to God. I tend to think that Gideon needed to clean his own house first. He needed to set his own clan in order by getting rid of the false gods and false idols. **Get rid of it. Let it go.** Whatever it is that God wants you to get rid or stop doing, the blessings of doing so much outweighs holding onto it with no comparison.

Maybe you feel something is too hard. I'm sure Gideon thought it was too hard for 300 men to defeat an army of 132,000. Maybe you really don't want to let it go. I'm sure many people didn't want to let go of their worship to Baal. "im ok the way I am," "I'm not hurting anyone" "I'm a good person" praise God for that, but unless your name is written... and you are born again, you will never inherit eternal life.

The great thing about living on this side of the cross is that God has already given us the greatest sign ever: the cross. Nothing can separate us from the love of God. We are more than conquerors. If God is for us, then who can be against us? Lay it on the line. You don't need to be rid of doubts as much as you just need to be courageous and step out in faithful action in spite of your doubts.

Jesus died for us. He died so that we can have a fresh start. Every last drop of blood poured out in love for you and I. But then the greatest sign ever: Jesus didn't stay dead. He was buried and on the 3rd day He was resurrected. Baal is still dead, Mohamed, still dead, Budda they turned into a statue, But Jesus is alive. The Bible says right now He is seated at the right hand of God the father and He is interceding for you and me. He is victorious over every power in heaven, on earth, and under the earth including sin and the greatest foe: death.

Gideon points us toward the cross. He points us toward Christ. What is God calling you to do? TO step out faith to follow Him? Don't let your doubts or anything else keep you from becoming the hero God intended for you.