

**Joke:** One Sunday morning, the pastor noticed little Alex was staring up at the large plaque that hung in the foyer of the church. The plaque was covered with names, and small American flags were mounted on either side of it. The seven-year-old had been staring at the plaque for some time, so the pastor walked up, stood beside him and said quietly, "Good morning, Alex."

"Good morning, Pastor," replied the young man, still focused on the plaque. "Pastor McGhee, what is this?" Alex asked.

"Well, son, it's a memorial to all the men and women who have died in the service."

Soberly, they stood together, staring at the large plaque. Little Alex's voice was barely audible when he finally managed to ask, "Which one, the 9:00 or 10:30 service."

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Have you ever felt inadequate for something you were called to do? What about that deer in the headlights look? The fish out of water feeling?

Well your not alone today I want you to meet Gideon. . .

Here's what's going on the Israelites were not being the children of God that they were called to be. They were walking in rebellion again, not obeying the things the Lord commanded, and so for 7 years the Lord hands them over to the Midianites.

Now the Lord wants to deliver them once again and so he needs a man to lead them.

So he looks around and finds another King David. Nope. Finds another over qualified highly skilled warrior. Nope.

He finds Gideon.

Gideon is well look at. . .

Judges 6:11 (NIV): 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.

So Gideon is not out practicing his ninja skills. He is threshing wheat in a basement to hide it from the Midianite army. Because much of the food that the Israelites had was been taken by the Midianites. So Gideon decides I'll come down in this basement so we can hide this wheat from these oppressive people.

Look at what happens next:

Judges 6:12 (NIV): When the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, he said, "The Lord is with you, mighty warrior."

Gideon no doubt didn't feel like a mighty warrior. As a matter of fact look how Gideon responds.

Judges 6:13 (NIV): "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."

Isn't that just like many of us. . .when life doesn't go the way we were hoping, when we have only heard of some of the miracles and not experienced them for ourselves we feel like the Lord must have abandoned us. We hear about a move from God in another area and think that He has abandon ours.

But here's the truth church, more often then not God sees something in you that you don't see in yourself. So He calls you to a mission, and he will equip you to fulfill it, if you will just continue to trust in Him.

I live Gideon it even gets better.

Judges 6:14–15 (NIV): 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 "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.”

More excuses. , ,listen to it again.

My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family.”

(Spend some time here....weakest, youngest, less known, etc.) - Moses not eloquent in speaking, David was too young, etc.

Back to Gideon he’s visited by an angel told he’s a mighty warrior, the Lord calls to him and says I’m sending you.

And Gideon after hearing all that was still uncertain.

Judges 6:17 (NIV): Gideon replied, “If now I have found favor in your eyes, give me a sign that it is really you talking to me.

How many times church do we miss God, because we question our status, our lack, our popularity, or whatever it is about us that we determine less impressive than the rest. All the time God is calling you a mighty warrior and we just look and think to ourselves He must be talking to somebody else more qualified.

Now this is funny. . .check this out.

Judges 6:36–37 (NIV): Gideon said to God, “If you will save Israel by my hand as you have promised—37 look, I will place a wool fleece on the threshing floor. If there is dew only on the fleece and all the ground is dry, then I will know that you will save Israel by my hand, as you said.”

In other words Gideon is saying, “Alright God I’ll make you a deal. I’ll believe it’s you if there is dew only on the fleece and all the ground is dry.”

Reminds me a bit about Thomas in the Scripture. Thomas was told . . . Since he wasn’t at the first encounter that Jesus came and walked through a locked door told

everyone peace be with you. Thomas is like ya right guys. Locked door and Jesus comes from the outside to the inside. Ok that's your story I'll. Believe when I can touch the nail scarred hands.

So a week later Thomas is with them and the same thing happens. (Think I'd be getting the locks checked out) and still Thomas needs to put his hands to the nailed scarred hands to believe.

Now let's get back to Gideon

Judges 6:38 (NIV):38 And that is what happened. Gideon rose early the next day; he squeezed the fleece and wrung out the dew—a bowlful of water.

Surely now he knows this must be God right? Look again. . .

Judges 6:39 (NIV): Then Gideon said to God, "Do not be angry with me. Let me make just one more request. Allow me one more test with the fleece, but this time make the

fleece dry and let the ground be covered with dew.”

Really Gideon. .

Judges 6:40 (NIV): That night God did so. Only the fleece was dry; all the ground was covered with dew.

Aren't you glad God is patient with us. As we do the same thing at times. God if you will bail me out one more time I'll serve you. God if you let me win the lottery I'll bless the church with some finances. Jesus if you give me a man I'll love you til I die. And when all is said and done, God chooses to bless us and we once again lean on our own understanding and forget to acknowledge Him. And yet God continues to love us in spite of us.

So let's fast forward to when Gideon is prepared himself enough to go and destroy the Midinite army. He's motivated some men to fight.

Judges 7:1–3 (NIV): Early in the morning, Jerub-Baal (that is, Gideon)



Let me pause here and explain why the name change. Gideon at home began to get things right with God he tore down some idols to Baal and began to put things back in order on the home front. But Scripture said he did it at night for fear of the people. When they all woke up and saw what had happened and found out who it was they wanted to kill Gideon, but instead they decided to let Baal their false god take care of him so they began calling him Jerub-Baal which means let Baal contend with him.

Now back to our text. . .

Judges 7:1–3 (NIV): Early in the morning, Jerub-Baal (that is, Gideon) and all his men camped at the spring of Harod. The camp of Midian was north of them in the valley near the hill of Moreh. 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.’ 3 Now announce to the army, ‘Anyone who trembles with fear may turn back and leave Mount Gilead.’ ” So twenty-two thousand men left, while ten thousand remained.

Here Gideon is, the same one that already had some self esteem issues is starting out with 32000 men. Sounds like a pretty good number but the the Lord says no you could still take some credit if you get the victory so tell them that if they are afraid to go home and 12000 do so. Still not a bad army right? Except that the Midinites had 135,000.

Oh but wait it gets even better. . .

Judges 7:4–6 (NIV): But the Lord said to Gideon, “There are still too many men. Take them down to the water, and I will thin them out 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 as a dog laps from those who kneel down to drink.” 6 Three hundred of them drank from cupped hands, lapping like dogs. All the rest got down on their knees to drink.

I believe there is something you need to pick up here your posture when you come before God must be one with a

heart prepared, a mind renewed, and the armor on prepared for battle.

(Talk about the difference between these two postures)

I think that holds a valuable listen. Scripture tells us that Satan roams the earth looking for someone to devour and if you have lowered your weapons and are not prayerfully watching He will throw darts at you that will make you think that God doesn't care, that you're not good enough. He will attack your thoughts and get you to start believing the lies that He is telling you is truth.

Judges 7:7–8 (NIV): 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 others go home.”  
8 So Gideon sent the rest of the Israelites home but kept the three hundred, who took over the provisions and trumpets of the others.

Judges 7:9–15 (NIV): 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 11 and 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. 12 The 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. 13 Gideon 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.” 14 His 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.” 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.

Gideon was obviously still afraid because he took his servant into the camp. But came back encouraged.

Listen church the Lord will put people in your life at the right time to give you the encouragement you need to make it through the battle.

But first we must learn to kneel before our Father so we will have the strength to stand against the enemy.

Judges 7:16 (NIV): Dividing the three hundred men into three companies, he placed trumpets and empty jars in the hands of all of them, with torches inside.

Whoa hold on where are the tanks? Ok maybe sling shots, catapult something.

Gideon are you nuts? You questioned if God was even talking to you. It took some convincing of that and now there's 300 of us and we are going into the enemy camp with what?

Trumpets and empty jars with torches inside. Ok this has to be a joke right.

Judges 7:17–18 (NIV): 17 “Watch me,” he told them. “Follow my lead. When I get to the edge of the camp, do exactly as I do. 18 When 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.’

Judges 7:19–21 (NIV): Gideon 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. 20 The 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!” 21 While each man held his position around the camp, all the Midianites ran, crying out as they fled.

Here’s the lesson I want you to get today. God took a nobody in the culture of the time. Made him a mighty warrior and led the people to a great victory.

And God is calling you to the same, but if your not careful

you will get to the waters edge of your victory and instead of kneeling and keeping watch over what the enemy is throwing in your direction you will lay down your weapons

(Talk about it- Word, prayer life, thoughts, etc.).