

Unlikely Heroes

By Mary Kane

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One morning, many years ago, when both of my boys were little, I was busy changing my youngest son's clothes. Scott lay on my bed, and played with his toes while I wrestled him out of his footie pajamas. I asked Erik to watch his brother for a moment while I stepped out of the room to grab some diaper lotion for Scott. As I left my bedroom, the wall light fell off the wall and tumbled to the bed below. The hot light bulb came into contact with the cotton sheets and very quickly began to smoke. As I walked back into the room I saw my brave three-year-old son grab the light by its wooden base, fling it to the hardwood floor. Frozen, Erik and I stared at each other for a moment, my mind whirling with what could have happened. With our eyes locked, Erik broke the silence with, "Mommy, I'm a hero!" My brave little son had saved our family from perhaps serious injury and loss. Erik was right; he was a hero, an unlikely hero.

God often uses unlikely heroes to bring deliverance to His people and glory to Himself. Gideon was one such man. When God called Gideon, no one would have accused him of being a hero, unlikely or otherwise.

Before we begin our study for today, please take a moment to pray and ask God to clean your heart of all unrighteousness and fill you with His Holy Spirit.

Please read Judges 6:1-16

Gideon lived in Israel in the *time of the judges* when, "everyone did what was right in his own eyes." During the *time of the judges*, Israel was trapped in a cycle of sin. Time and time again the people of Israel fell into idolatry. When they repented, God sent a judge to deliver them from the hands of their enemies. It is during this season, while hiding in a winepress, God calls Gideon to deliver His people from the hands of the Midianites.

The name *Gideon* means *a hewer, one who cuts down*.

Check verse 11. What's Gideon doing and what can we infer Gideon had *cut down*?

What does God call Gideon to *cut down* in verse 25?

God also calls *Gideon* to *cut down* another item— the enemies who oppress His people. Like Gideon, God may call us to deliver others from the affects of sin and unrighteousness.

Do you have a friend who is struggling to break free from a stronghold of sin?

Do you have any strongholds in your life that need to be *cut down*?

We will not experience freedom until we cut down our strongholds. In general, what does a person use to *cut down* something—a sharp tool, correct?

If we are in a stronghold of sin according to Hebrews 4:12, what tool must we use to *cut it down*?

Glance over our text for today.

After scanning Judges 6:1-16, how would you describe Gideon?

How does Gideon describe himself (verses 13, 15, 27)?

The NKJV uses the words *weak* and *least*. The Hebrew word for *weakest* in this verse is *dal*, which means *low, poor, weak, thin, one who is low*. The word *least* transliterates from the Hebrew as *tsa`iyir*, which means *little, insignificant, youngest, despised*. Gideon describes himself as weak and fearful—fearful of his enemies, and fearful of his family. His life is marked by fear. Gideon is an unlikely hero.

Can it be that Gideon is chosen by God to deliver His people not *in spite* of his flaws but *because* of his flaws? It is likely many other people also believe Gideon to be *weak and least*. If Gideon had been a strong man, everyone would credit him with the victory over the Midianites, but because of Gideon's weaknesses, God will get the glory.

Glance back at the words Gideon uses to describe himself. In contrast, what words does God use to describe Gideon (verses 12, 14, 16)?

The NKJV transliterates the two of the words God uses to describe Gideon as *mighty* and *valor*.

Mighty: Transliterated as *gibbowr*, which means *strong, brave, mighty man, a hero, a warrior, a soldier, a commander of an army*

Valor: Transliterated as *chayil*, which means *strength, might, efficiency, wealth, army, of virtue, uprightness and integrity*

... all of the things that Gideon believes he is not, but would soon become by the power of God. Why is there such a disconnect between how Gideon views himself and how God views him? Why is there such a disconnect between how God views us and how we view ourselves? Whose view is correct? We cannot listen to our own counsel concerning our character because our hearts are deceitful above all things. Likewise, we cannot listen to the words of the Evil One because he is the Father of Lies. Our friends also have flawed hearts and are not able to always discern truth. Therefore, God's view is the only one we can trust; His view is always truth. And like Gideon, God does not see us as we are now; He sees us as we will become.

When God calls Gideon to be an unlikely hero he is cowering in a winepress, but soon, though greatly outnumbered and out armed, he courageously attacks a powerful enemy. When did this great change overcome Gideon? —When he started listening to God and acting on the *truth*. Like Gideon we also need to listen to truth. If we heed what the voice of the enemy we will never realize our calling in the Lord. We may even need to silence the voices of our close friends and family members. God has amazing things He wants you and me to

accomplish. It does not matter if we are poor, sickly, short, uneducated or weak. God will use *anyone* who is willing. Glory!

From this portion of Scripture, we learn several important concepts. Please read the items below, apply them to your life and complete the phrase that follows:

1. *Like Gideon when we feel weak we are still powerful, because we have God.* Therefore, I can ...
2. *Like Gideon when we feel weak we are still called, anointed and chosen by God to do His kingdom work.* Therefore, I will still ...
3. *Like Gideon, when we believe we are at our weakest physically, financially, emotionally, God is preparing us to accomplish a great work.* Therefore, in order to cooperate with God, I will ...
4. *Like Gideon, God's strength manifest in us is not dependent upon our strength. When we are weak, He is strong.* Therefore, I have the strength I need to ...
5. *Like Gideon, God's view of who we are is the truth. His opinion is the only one that matters.* Therefore, I am ...

After Gideon confesses his weakness, what does God tell him to do anyway?

God still tells Gideon to *go*. With God our command is always *go*—never *give up* or *retreat* or *surrender*. We never wave a white flag to the enemy. Our perceived weakness does not give us *an out* when God is calling us to do a great work through Him. With God we will always be victorious *if we don't give up*.

Why does Gideon defeat the Midianites?

Because God is with him. Despite his perceived weaknesses and flaws, God uses Gideon, along with an army of 300 men to defeat the Midianites and bring peace to the land of Israel. You can read the details of the battle in Judges 6:17-8:28.

What is God calling you to do despite your weakness?

Today, God is calling you to come out of your hiding place, accept the truth of who you are in Christ and fight for your family and your nation. *Remember, when Gideon believed he was at his weakest, God was busy preparing him to accomplish his greatest work.* "Go forth in the strength that you have, mighty warrior." He is with you, He will fight for you, He will uphold you with His victorious right hand.

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