

Jesus Wants to Take Your Failures and Turn Them Into His Victory

Gideon asks a vital question at the beginning of Judges 6:13: “If the Lord is with us, then why has all this happened to us? Where are all His miracles that our fathers told us about?”

Some of you have been wondering the same thing as Gideon.

Praise has felt hollow. Prayer has become wearisome. The robust declarations of other believers fall at your feet with a dull thud.

You are tired of all the talk.

You are needing to see God do something.

How easy it is to become convinced that your present overwhelming circumstances will override the goodness and promises of God. The blight on the modern church is that we have become addicted to information—and most of the information we find is unpleasant. The noise of the culture drowns out the whisper of the Spirit. Newsfeeds own our attention more than the Word of God. COVID and politics have become the chosen context for how we are thinking, feeling and responding in life. All of that nastiness that you once recognized as being on the outside of you has somehow, stealthily gotten inside of you. Things are just messed up these days.

So, a long time ago, Gideon asked an honest question.

But it’s an embarrassing question. He is bold enough to ask out loud what less-honest believers are asking secretly within: Where is the God that we once easily believed in?

Gideon's awareness of God (and confidence in God) had become completely clouded out by the longstanding difficulty he and his people were experiencing. The testimonies of the goodness of God from former generations seemed like fairytales to Gideon. He had lost His assurance in the willingness and ability of God to properly care for him. Gideon was now skeptical that God would ever come through. He just learned how to live in dread of the enemy until the next time that enemy came and put a hurt to him. His whole life became an existence of looking for the next defeat.

As a result, he found himself all alone in a winepress, hiding from an enemy, waiting for another round of trouble to find him.

So, what did God do when He saw that all that Gideon was producing was deep fear, growing doubt, suffocating cynicism and undeniable frustration with God?

Well, the Almighty did the unexpected. Instead of heaping shame on His doubting son, God came to Gideon and called out his true identity; giving him an assignment from heaven.

God personally showed up where Gideon was hiding out. He greeted him with a shocking statement of, "The Lord is with you, O mighty man of valor" (Judg. 6:11b). He then told Gideon that He was giving him an invitation to become the one whom God would use to turn the tide of trouble in Israel.

He said, "Go in this strength of yours. Save Israel from the control of Midian. Have I not sent you?" (Judg. 6:14).

God completely dismissed the difficult circumstances, the defeatist mindset within Gideon and the intimidating success rate of the enemy against Israel in that current season. It was as if God was ignoring the big problems and speaking confidently and enthusiastically about the solution. It was like He was God or something.

In essence, God communicates to an unlikely hero, "I am about to crush the enemy, and I am looking for someone to enlist. You are the one I have chosen. You are my pick. I see who you are going to become, and I declare that you are mighty, faithful, valiant and a perfect choice for what I am about to do. What do you say, Gideon? Do you want to do this with Me?"

Gideon responds, "You must not know who I am. You have picked the wrong person. I'm the runt in a family of runts who have lived in Runt-town forever. I'm out here hiding, don't you see that? God, respectfully, you've got it wrong. I am none of those things that You have said."

"Then the Lord said to him, 'But I will be with you" (Judg. 6:16a).

And there is the answer.

For Gideon. And for you.

If you are not familiar with what plays out in the life of Gideon, you should make a mission of reading his story in the book of Judges. God did some incredible things with him. It's interesting that we are permitted to see the spiritual evolution of this chosen servant of the Lord. God bears with Gideon in all his needs for reassurance about who he was and what God had called him to do. God baby-stepped him out of that winepress and into the war. Indeed, the Lord did exactly what He promised, and Gideon became exactly who God declared him to be. God declared Gideon's identity, and then He led Gideon into that identity one step at a time.

That is what He does with all of us. He especially likes to assign our identities and enlist us on His missions during seasons when it looks like everything is falling apart. He is the God of paradox, and He doesn't have to wait for external situations to improve before He does his deepest and most amazing works inside of us. He is presently opposing your doubt by repeatedly speaking over you who you truly are. Are

you making time and place to listen for His voice? He will prove who you truly are by calling you out of your self-made hiding place and putting you somewhere for which you are fairly certain you are not ready. Nobody on the entire planet thought Gideon was a mighty man who could rescue Israel. Nobody but the one who made the planet had no doubts at all.

Gideon was God's handpicked hero. He didn't feel it. He could not envision it. He protested against it. He asked God to prove it with signs.

But God did not give up on Gideon when he failed to respond with a robust war-cry. He just kept showing Gideon the one thing Gideon needed to believe:

"I will be with you."

And that was enough for Gideon to keep saying yes. It is enough for you too. {eoa}