

The Call of Gideon

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Judges 6

Gideon will be used by God in the book of Judges. In him, we see the necessary preparation for usefulness in God's kingdom. It is summarized for us in **2 Corinthians 12:9-10**. At the end of verse 10, we read, "*For when I am weak, then I am strong.*" God calls Gideon to a great work of deliverance.

This call is not the way our schoolyard kickball teams were formed. It is not the strong, talented, and mighty on this earth that God chooses first. God uses the weak, humble, and base things to show forth His glory. In the call of Gideon, we are reminded of this truth.

When God chooses His team, He flips the lineup of our kickball game. He chooses the weak and lowly and then brings them to see themselves rightly in the face of His holiness (**1 Cor 1:26-29; Matthew 5:3**), so that no one boasts but Him.

I. Oppression Humbles: God's Sovereignty in Oppression (Judges 6:1-10)

- A. **The Established Pattern:** the recurring cycle of the Judges. (**Judges 6:1, cf. 2:18-19**)
 - 1. The downward spiral: Rebellion/Sin (**6:1, *did evil***) – Retribution/Bondage (**6:1, *the LORD gave***) – Remorse/Supplication (**6:6b, *cried out for help***) – Deliverance/Salvation – Rest/Peace.
 - 2. In **6:1-10**, we only see the first three; deliverance/salvation and rest/peace wait for God to move through Gideon.
 - 3. In **Judges 6:1**, we see the pattern in miniature: "*Israel did what was evil...and the LORD gave them into the hand of Midian.*" The LORD is the Agent; Midian is the rod in His hand (**See Isaiah 10:5, 12, 15**), yet God holds His rod accountable for its own actions.
- B. **The Divine Instrument of Chastisement:** who Midian was and what they did (**Judges 6:2-6a**)
 - 1. The instrument: Midianites (**Genesis 25:1-2**), descended from Abraham and Keturah, his second wife.
 - 2. The affliction: Opportunistic raids at harvest stripped the land bare and drove Israel into the caves. "*Israel was brought very low*" (**6:6a**), languishing, worn down, humbled.
- C. **The Proper Understanding:** how to read the chastening rightly (**Judges 6:6b-10**)
 - 1. Israel cried out (Remorse/Supplication) (**6:6b**); God answered first with a prophet, not a deliverer, and through him gave an indictment before the rescue: **I am able**, but "*you have not obeyed my voice*" (**6:10**).
 - 2. In God's discipline, we can wrongly, in our humanness, misinterpret God's actions.
 - a) God has not abandoned us (**6:8-9**).
 - b) God has not weakened - the Arm that shattered Egypt has lost none of its strength (**6:8-9**).
 - c) God has not disowned us (**6:10**).
 - (1) But God is waiting. ("*You have not obeyed my voice.*" **6:10**) In our disobedience, God does not reject us but instead is calling us to repentance.

II. Commission Sends - God's Sovereignty in Commission (Judges 6:11-14)

- A. **The Messenger who comes (6:11a; cf. 2:1-6; 5:23)**
 - 1. The angel of the LORD sits under the oak at Ophrah — the same figure who indicted Israel at Bochim (**2:1-6**) and cursed Meroz for staying home (**5:23**).
 - 2. The One who brought the charge now brings the call. (Spoken of interchangeably with the LORD in **vss. 14 & 16** — the historic reading is a preincarnate appearance of the Son).
- B. **The man He finds (6:11b)**
 - 1. Gideon is beating out wheat in a winepress "*to hide it from Midianites.*" Threshing belongs on a windy hilltop; a winepress is a pit.
 - 2. The picture is fear — the man God is about to call a warrior is hiding in a hole.
- C. **The message He brings (6:12)**
 - 1. "*The LORD is with you*" — presence, not performance; the same word that decided the whole book (2:18), now spoken to one man.
 - 2. "*O mighty man of valor*" — God declares Gideon's future. Gideon never "claims it"; he only believes the One who said it.

D. **The response it provokes (6:13)**

1. *"Why has all this happened to us?"* — God's word of presence collides with Gideon's experience of absence, and he says so. God does not rebuke the honesty. No doubt, some of us still ask "why?"
2. *"Where are all His wonderful deeds?"* — he looks back to the fathers' stories and cannot find them now.

E. **The commission it becomes (6:14)**

"Go in this might of yours... do not I send you?" What might? Gideon has none — that was his complaint. The "might" is the presence just declared in v. 12. The commission rests on nothing in Gideon; it rests entirely on the One who sends. **That is the heading: Commission Sends — the authority is in the sending, not the man.**

III. Promise Sustains - God's Sovereignty in Promise (Judges 6:15-16)

A. **The Promise Meets Him in His Inadequacy (6:15)**

"How can I save Israel? Behold, my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house."

1. **The weakest clan** — he disqualifies himself by tribe.
2. **The least in his father's house** — then by family. The smallest man, in the smallest house, of the smallest clan.

→ **2 Cor 12:9-10**: Gideon's inventory of weakness is not the obstacle to his call — it *is* the qualification. God was looking for a man empty enough to be filled, small enough that the victory could never be mistaken for his own. *"When I am weak, then I am strong."*

B. **The Promise Is Grounded in His Presence (6:16)**

"But I will be with you, and you shall strike the Midianites as one man."

1. **"I will be with you"** — God does not answer weakness by arguing Gideon is stronger than he thinks. He answers it with Himself. The same three words from v. 12, now a personal pledge. This is the whole doctrine of usefulness in one line: not *"you are able,"* but *"I am with you."*
2. **"You shall strike the Midianites as one man"** — certainty and posture. The whole host will fall as easily as one man. From cave-hiding defense to striking offense.

→ Gideon's sword was literal; ours is *"the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God"* (**Eph. 6:17**) — the believer's only offensive weapon. The truth for the believer and Gideon: the strength to engage in battle is never native to the soldier, but supplied by the God who calls, sends, and stands with him.

→ **Hebrews 11:32-34**, *"time would fail me to tell of Gideon..."*, *"were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight."* The very same God who called, strengthened, and empowered Gideon is the very same God who does the same in a believer's life today.