



# PEOPLE GOD USES

Preaching and Teaching Resources

ADRIAN ROGERS





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# People God Uses

**SERMON REFERENCE:** Hebrews 11; Judges 6-7

**LWF SERMON NUMBER:** #2406

The champions of faith listed in Hebrews 11 give us an idea of the kind of people God uses to accomplish His mighty plans.

Hebrews 11:32-34 says, "...For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon... who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle..."

This passage reminds us of Gideon's story in Judges 6-7 and shows five characteristics of people that God uses.

## **First, God uses common people.**

By His Spirit, God turned Gideon, a once fearful farmer, into a valiant warrior.

God does not rely on our abilities, but on our availability to Him to work through us in extraordinary ways.

## **Second, God uses cleansed people.**

Before God could send Gideon to battle, Gideon had to do away with the idols in His life and surrender in worship.

Adrian Rogers says, "An idol is anything you love, fear, serve or value more than God." God will not use us if there is unconfessed sin in our lives. We must crush our idols, repent, and be cleansed from the inside out.

## **Third, God uses courageous people.**

In Judges 7, God gives Gideon the command to send away soldiers who are afraid. This shows us that God can better use a smaller number of brave souls than a larger group of fearful ones.

As children of God, we have been given a spirit of power and love. This does not mean we become naturally courageous—it means we are filled with His Spirit.

## **Fourth, God uses cautious people.**

We are called to be on guard at all times, ready to fight against the temptation to sin.

Adrian Rogers says, "Sin is a combination of an unexpected opportunity, an unprotected life and an undetected weakness."

## **Finally, God uses confident people.**

Gideon led the charge with confidence because He knew God was with Him.

God gave them victory that day, and when we are confident that God is with us, we can be used in victorious ways.

## **Life Application**

God has mighty plans and He wants to use us to accomplish them. Make certain that your heart is clean. He may not use you the way you expect, but if you make yourself available to Him, He will use you.



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## 1) INTRODUCTION

- a) Gideon was an ordinary man, but God used him mightily.
- b) Would you like God to use you? Will it make any difference that you lived?
- c) “He was born, he lived, he died.” Will that be true of you?
- d) Hebrews 11:32 gives a list of brave men and prophets who changed their world:
  - i) Samson
  - ii) Jephtha
  - iii) David
  - iv) Samuel
  - v) The prophets
  - vi) Gideon
- e) Will you leave a vacancy when you die? Will it make any difference that you lived? What is your life ultimately counting for? Who are the people God uses?
- f) These were dark days in Israel.
  - i) The devil was winning victory after victory.
  - ii) The people of God had seemingly thrown in the towel.
  - iii) They didn’t expect God to do miracles or save multitudes.
- g) The same beliefs are true of our generation today.
  - i) God’s hand cannot move.
  - ii) God’s cannot hear.
  - iii) God’s eyes cannot see.
  - iv) People think we cannot have a mighty revival today.
- h) No Scripture says we can’t have revival today.
  - i) Many Christians are just simply waiting for Jesus to get here.
  - ii) There’s never been a greater age to live and preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
  - iii) God wants you to be in the middle of it.
- i) Fearful, Gideon was hiding from the Midianites.
  - i) The Angel of the Lord calls him a “mighty man of valor.”
  - ii) Gideon laments.
    - (1) God no longer helps His people—no more miracles.
    - (2) “God has abandoned us.”
    - (3) God is to blame for all their troubles.
    - (4) Today, many of us feel the same way.
  - iii) God says Gideon will go out and rescue Israel “Go in this thy might.”
  - iv) Gideon says he is poor and his father’s household is least is his tribe.
- j) Do not insult God by saying God cannot use you.



## 2) GOD USES COMMON PEOPLE

- a) Gideon was a fearful farmer, but God called him a man of valor.
  - i) God did not see Gideon as he was, God saw him as he could be with God's power upon him.
  - ii) It is not what you are in-and-of yourself.
- b) Judges 6:34 says, "The Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon."
  - i) In the Hebrews it literally says, "The Spirit of the Lord clothed Himself with Gideon."
  - ii) It is not the man, it is God in the man.
- c) 1 Corinthians 1:26-27
  - i) Paul is speaking to a group of early Christians God used to turn the world upside down.
  - ii) "Wise men after the flesh" means not many PhD's.
  - iii) "Not many mighty" means not who are strong physically.
  - iv) "Not many noble" means people of high birth.
  - v) "Foolish" in the Greek is the word we get our word moron from.
  - vi) "Weak things of the world" means those who are physically weak.
    - (1) God chooses the weak things of this world to confound the wise.
  - vii) It is not scholarship; it is relationship! It is not ability; it is availability. It is not fame; it is faith.
  - viii) God wants ordinary people to do extraordinary things so God Himself can receive the glory.

## 3) GOD USES CLEANSED PEOPLE

- a) Baal is a filthy fertility god.
  - i) People would sacrifice their children to Baal and commit fornication in the name of Baal.
  - ii) This is the same god that has taken over America.
  - iii) God told Gideon to take a bull, pull down the altar to Baal, cut down the trees around the altar and use them to build an altar to God and offer a blood sacrifice.
- b) If you want God to use you, you've got to take the idols out of your life.
  - i) Modern-day America is filled with our idols.
  - ii) An idol is anything you love more, fear more, serve more or value more than God.
    - (1) You can make an idol out of your job, your own persona; anything.
- c) The problem with Gideon and his people:
  - i) Their lives were stained with sin.
  - ii) They had forsaken God.
  - iii) They were serving idols.
- d) God will not use you if there is unconfessed, un-repent-ed-of sin in your life.
  - i) We must be clean if we want God to use us.
  - ii) God will not use us if there is any idolatry in our life.
- e) Is Jesus Christ number one in your life?
  - i) If not, you have an idol somewhere.

## 4) GOD USES COURAGEOUS PEOPLE

- a) Judges 6:12
  - i) "Valor" means courage.



- b) God is going to make Gideon a general.
  - i) Gideon sent out a call and 32,000 people came to help him deliver Israel from the Midianites.
- c) God tells Gideon to send home all those who are afraid.
  - i) Judges 7:2-3
  - ii) Two-thirds of them leave.
  - iii) Today, if you are a coward, God cannot use you.
    - (1) God is looking for mighty men of valor.
    - (2) God is not impressed by the size of a congregation.
      - (a) We can be many, and not much.
    - (3) God is looking for brave souls.
    - (4) God is looking for courageous people.
    - (5) God is looking for people who cannot be intimidated.
    - (6) God was not impressed by the size of Gideon's army.
      - (a) The church may be growing, but so is the cemetery.
    - (7) God does not save by many.
    - (8) Fear fits you for failure, not fighting.
    - (9) Fear is infectious.
      - (a) Deuteronomy 20:8
      - (b) Fearful people infect others.
  - iv) God has not given us "a spirit of fear."
    - (1) 2 Timothy 1:7
    - (2) The spirit of fear is like a fog that lingers in the air.
    - (3) God has given us the Spirit of power instead.
    - (4) Jesus said, "You shall receive power."
      - (a) Acts 1:8
  - v) 1 John 4:18
  - vi) Love removes fear.
    - (1) The question is not, "Are you brave enough?" The question is, "Do you love enough?"
- d) God has given us the spirit of a sound mind.
  - i) 2 Timothy 1:7
  - ii) A "sound mind" literally means a mind that "cannot be stampeded."
  - iii) A sound mind sees things as they are, not controlled by fear.
  - iv) Getting filled with the Spirit of God, you'll find yourself unusually courageous.

## 5) GOD USES CAUTIOUS PEOPLE

- a) This is not a contradictory to the other points.
- b) Judges 7:4-8
  - i) God arranges a test to see who among the remaining men are cautious.
    - (1) Most of them, 9,700 men, got on their hands and knees and drank directly from the water, exposing their neck to the enemy above.
    - (2) 300 men knelt down and spooned the water with their hand as they looked around; these were cautious men.



- c) God wants us to be both courageous and cautious; this is the balance of the Bible.
  - i) Philippians 1:28
  - ii) 1 Peter 5:8
  - iii) We shouldn't saunter forth saying, "There's nothing to be afraid of."
    - (1) The devil is a wicked, cruel, cunning, malevolent enemy, out to sabotage us.
  - iv) Matthew 26:41
  - v) Mark 14:38
  - vi) 1 Corinthians 9:27
  - vii) We need to watch what we view on television or read in magazines.
  - viii) Be careful about the company you keep.
  - ix) Watch the places you go.
  - x) There is an enemy that is real and we need to stay on your guard or God can't use us.
- d) Winston Churchill said, "We must be ready at our weakest possible moment to meet anything the enemy brings against us at his strongest possible moment."
- e) Sin is an unexpected opportunity, an unprotected life, and an undetected weakness.
  - i) 1 Corinthians 10:12

## 6) GOD USES CONFIDENT PEOPLE

- a) Judges 7:12-15
- b) Gideon needs to understand that God is with him.
- c) God tells Gideon to get another man and go into the Midianite camp.
- d) God allows Gideon to overhear what the enemy is saying about him.
- e) One Midianite soldier tells another about a dream he just had.
  - i) In the dream, a loaf of barley bread falls into a tent, causing it to collapse.
  - ii) The other man interpreted that the loaf of barley stood for Gideon and God's people.
  - iii) Barley bread was the poorest quality bread.
  - iv) Gideon reported back to his army that they had won.
- f) Hell dreads the person of God who comes against it with confidence.
  - i) The devil hopes you never understand who you are or what you have in Jesus Christ.
- g) Some people are too big in their own sight for God to use, but a man small in his own sight can still be used of God.
  - i) God wants to do extraordinary things through ordinary people.
  - ii) Make certain your heart is clean and you're filled with the Spirit.
  - iii) You have what you need to conquer the enemy if your heart is clean and you're filled with the Holy Spirit.
  - iv) You may be only a piece of barley bread, but God is going to use you.
  - v) There is a dread in Hell that one day God's people will wake up as to who we are and what we have in the Lord Jesus.



- h) The soldiers in the tent were already afraid; that's the devil's crowd.
  - i) Gideon was known in Hell.
    - (1) Are you known in Hell?
  - ii) You cannot have your name posted in Heaven's Hall of Champions unless it is also posted on Hell's bulletin board of enemies.
  - iii) Gideon was known in Hell.
- i) In Acts 19:11-20
  - i) The 7 sons of Sceva tried to cast out a demon from a man .
    - (1) They said, "Come out in the name of Jesus whom Paul preaches;" that is second-hand religion.
    - (2) The demon did not recognize them or their authority.
- j) Demons need to know you are courageous, cautious, confident God can use you.

## 7) CONCLUSION

- a) Would you like to live in victory? What difference is your life going to make? What is your life going to count for? Don't say you're just an ordinary person or too old, too young, too poor, too uneducated.
  - i) 1 Corinthians 1:26-29
- b) Make yourself available to God, and God will use you
- c) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- d) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
  - i) Romans 3:23
  - ii) Romans 10:9-10
  - iii) Romans 10:13
  - iv) Acts 16:31
  - v) John 3:16





# People God Uses

**SERMON REFERENCE:** Hebrews 11; Judges 6-7

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Would you take God's Word? Turn to Hebrews chapter 11. We've been working our way through this wonderful chapter. We're calling it, "Champions of Faith." And we come now to verse 32. He has given us one champion after another. And then in Hebrews chapter 11 verse 32 to 34, he says, "And what shall I more say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; and David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets. Who, through faith, subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens."

Now we're going to take some of these names in here and today we're going to be talking about Gideon. One of the things about Gideon that is particularly impressive to me is that he was an ordinary man and God used him mightily. The title of the message is, "People God Uses." Would you like God to use you? I mean, would you really? Will it make any difference that you lived?

Linus kept after Lucy in the comic strip, Peanuts. Linus kept saying to Lucy, "Tell me a story, tell me a story, tell me a story." Finally, in exasperation, Lucy said, "A man was born, he lived, he died." She walked away. Linus said, "Kind of makes you wonder, doesn't it?" Is that going to be true of you? He was born, he lived, he died. You draw your breath, you draw your salary, you exist to live, you live to exist, and that is all?

I heard of a man named Willie who worked for an organization. And Willie died and somebody came and said, "I'd like to apply to fill Willie's place. I want Willie's vacancy." The boss said, "Willie didn't leave any vacancy." And I'm just wondering if there are a lot of us who will not really leave any vacancy when we go. Will it make any difference that you lived? What is your life really, ultimately counting for? Who are the kind of people that God uses?

Now let me tell you the situation for our passage of Scripture. And, by the way, turn back over, if you would, to Judges chapter 6. Judges chapter 6 and we're going to find here the life of this man, Gideon, that we're talking about today who is listed as a champion of the faith. Judges chapter 6. And let me give you the background now.

There were dark days in Israel. The devil was going about as a roaring lion, and the enemies of God were gaining victory upon victory, and the people of God had seemingly thrown in the towel. No longer are they singing, "Onward Christian Soldiers." They've hunkered down. They're singing, "Hold the Fort." That's all they were trying to do.

Now I believe that's our generation today. We have thought, "Well, perhaps today we can't have any miracles today." That's what Gideon said. "Where are all the miracles that we used to hear of?" We have a generation today that really doesn't expect God to do miracles. "Poor God. He's not what He used to be. He doesn't have the power today that He used to have. No longer can He save multitudes, shake cities, turn the world upside down. God's kind of old, isn't He? God's kind of sick, isn't He? God's hand is feeble that it cannot move. God's ear is heavy that He cannot hear. God's eyes are dull that He cannot see."



No, my friend! God is still God, and we need to understand that there's not one shred of Scripture that says we cannot have a mighty revival in this day and age in which we live. Most of us don't believe that. You talk about revival, all people do is give a sympathetic smile. And they're simply waiting for Jesus Christ to get here. I'm here as your pastor to tell you there has never been a greater day, a greater age, to live and to preach the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ. And I'm going to tell you something else. God wants you, I said, you, sir; you, madam. God wants you to be in the middle of it. God has a mighty plan for you. And we need to stop moaning and groaning and complaining about living in the last days.

Now in our passage of Scripture we're going to find something about Gideon. He's kind of hunkered down. Judges 6 verse 11 through 13, "And there came an angel of the Lord, and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash, the Abiezrite: and his son, Gideon, threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites." Now he's not up on the threshing floor. He's down at the winepress. The threshing floor is up on the hilltop so the wind will blow the chaff away. The winepress is down there to collect the wine. So he's hiding now from the Midianites.

"And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him, and said unto him, 'The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor.'" That's one thing Gideon would not think of himself as being, folks, a mighty man of valor. As a matter of fact, he is frightened to death. And he says, "'The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor.' And Gideon said unto him, 'O my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? And where be all the miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, 'Did not the Lord bring us from Egypt?' But now the Lord hath forsaken us.'"

Now there're many of us who feel the same way. "Oh, how wonderful it was back in the olden times when God was moving mightily, but now God has turned His back on us. God has forsaken us." And here Gideon is trying to blame it on God. Gideon here is waiting on God, but God is waiting on Gideon, as we're going to see. Judges 6 verses 14 to 16, "'The Lord hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hand of the Midianites.' And the Lord looked upon him, and said, 'Go in this thy might,'" underscore that, "'in this thy might.'"

Now here's a man frightened to death. God calls him a man of valor and speaks of his might. "And thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have not I sent thee?" And he said unto Him, 'O, my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? Behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.' And the Lord said unto him, 'Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.'" God says, "Gideon, I've got a job for you to do, and you're a mighty man."

He said, "Lord, do you know who you're talking to? Lord, of all the families in Israel, all the tribes, my tribe is the least, and all of the families in that tribe, my family is the poorest, and all of the kids in that family, I am the runt of the litter. You're saying that God is going to use me?" And God is saying, "Yes, Gideon, I'm going to use you."

Now I want you to listen to me. Are you listening? Don't you dare insult God by saying God can't use you. Don't you dare do it! Don't you say, "Who am I? How can God use me? I'm just an ordinary person." I want to show you today, friend, that God can use you, and you, yes, you ma'am; you, sir; you teen, you can be in God's Hall of Champions.

Now let me give you five characteristics of people that God uses. Number one: **God uses common people.** Look again in Judges 6 verse 14 to 16, "And the Lord looked upon him, and said, 'Go in this thy



might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent thee?' And he said unto Him, 'O my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? Behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.' And the Lord said unto him, 'I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.'

Here was a fearful farmer, but God says he is a man of valor. Why is this? God did not see Gideon as he was; God saw him as he could be with God's power upon him. You see, it's not what you are in and of yourself. We might be common as such. Look on down to Judges 6 verse 34. The Bible says, "But the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon." Do you see that? "The Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon." In the Hebrew language it literally says, "The Spirit of the Lord clothed Himself with Gideon." How would you like for God to wear you like a suit of clothes? And, therefore, it is not necessarily the man; it is God in the man. God will wear you, friend, like a suit of clothes. God uses ordinary people.

Put in your margin First Corinthians chapter 1 verse 26 and 27. Paul in the New Testament is talking to that group of Christians that was going to be used to turn the world upside down. And he said, "For you see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh," that is, not many Ph.D.s, "not many mighty," that is, not many people who are strong physically, "not many noble," that means people of high birth, "are called; But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world," that word, foolish, is the word we get our word moron from, "to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world," that word means physically weak, anemic, sickly, "to confound the things which are mighty." God takes these kind of people. Folks, that's folks like us. What is God saying? It is not scholarship; it is relationship! It is not ability; it is availability! It is not fame; it is faith! God wants ordinary people to do extraordinary things so God Himself can get the glory from it.

Years ago in New Jersey there was a man advertised that he was going to play a concert on an extremely valuable violin. People came from all over to hear him play. He tucked that instrument under his chin and began to play. You could hear the laughter of children as he played. You could hear the songs of the birds in the trees as he played. You could hear babies cry as he played. People were amazed at the music that came from that violin. When he had finished the concert, he took that violin and broke it on his knee. "Ahhh!" They were aghast. "Why has he done that?" Then he opened his case and brought out the expensive violin. He said, "The violin that I've been playing on is a fiddle I bought for a few dollars." And then he said, "It is not so much the violin that makes the music as it is the man who draws the bow." Now you may be just a cheap fiddle but, friend, God is the one, the Maestro, God is the one who can make music out of your life and my life. God uses common people! God can use you. Say, "Amen."

Now secondly: **God uses cleansed people.** Look if you will now in Judges chapter 6 verse 25 and 26, "And it came to pass the same night, that the Lord said unto him, 'Take thy father's young bullock,'" that's a young bull, "even the second bullock of seven years old, and throw down the altar of Baal.'" Baal was a filthy fertility god. They sacrificed their children to Baal. They committed fornication and adulterous acts in the name of Baal. It was the god of sexuality. It's the same god that has taken over America today. "And throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and cut down the grove that is by it." That is, "There's an altar here. You take a bull, hook a chain to it, and pull that altar down." "And build an altar unto the Lord thy God upon the top of the rock, in the ordered place, and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove which thou shalt cut down." Now they worshipped Baal in groves. So He says, "You tear down the altar, take the grove, cut down the trees, build a fire, and offer a blood sacrifice there."



Point: if you want God to use you, you've got to take the idols out of your life. If you want God to use you, you have to take the idols out of your life. You say, "Well, Pastor, this is a modern day. We don't have any idols." Who are you kidding? What is an idol? Something made of stick or stone? Not necessarily. Let me tell you what an idol is. An idol is anything you love more, fear more, serve more, value more than God. That's an idol. Anything you fear more, love more, serve more, value more than God; that is an idol. It doesn't matter what it is. You can make an idol of your job. You can make an idol of your own persona. Now, God says you've got to get the idols out of your life. Now the problem with Gideon and those around him is their lives were stained with sin, they had forsaken the Lord their God, and they were serving idol gods.

Now you want God to use you? Listen to me, God will not, He will not, He will not, He will not use you if there's unconfessed, un-repent-ed-of sin in your life. He will not do it. You want to know, "Why God doesn't use me?" You ask yourself that question. Is your heart clean? Friend, the Bible says in Isaiah 52 verse 11, "Be clean that bear the vessels of the Lord." I don't even like to wash my feet in a dirty vessel. Now we've got to be clean if we want God to use us. And God is not going to use us if, friend, there is any idolatry in our lives. Is Jesus Christ number one in your life? If He's not, you have an idol somewhere.

Number three: God not only uses common people, and God not only uses cleansed people, but **God uses courageous people**. Look, if you will, in Judges 6 verse 12, "And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him, and said unto him, 'The Lord is with thee,'" now watch this, "'thou mighty man of valor.'" Valor? We don't use that word much, but it means courage. Now, not only was God going to use Gideon, but God was going to make Gideon a general. And He said, "Gideon, blow the trumpet, gather an army." And he did, and 32,000 people came to help him to deliver Israel from the oppression of the Midianites.

Now begin in Judges chapter 7 verses 2 and 3, "And the Lord said unto Gideon, 'The people that are with thee are too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against Me, saying, 'Mine own hand hath saved me.'" Now, therefore, go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying,'" now underscore this, "'Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from Mount Gilead.' And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand."

Here they are: 32,000 people. General Gideon says, "Listen to me! I have an announcement. If there's anybody here who is afraid, we can't use you. Go home. You're excused." 32,000! After the stampede, Gideon gets up and brushes himself off. Ten thousand are all that's left. He's lost two-thirds of his army. They've gone home. Today, if you're a coward, God cannot use you. God is looking for mighty men of valor. God is not impressed with the size of this congregation. We can be many and not much. God is looking for brave souls. God is looking for courageous people. God is looking for people that cannot be intimidated. Gideon's army, his number didn't impress God. You say, "Well, our church is growing." So is the cemetery. God doesn't save by many. He says, "If you're afraid, I can't use you." Fear fits you for failure, not for fighting. Besides that, fear is infectious.

Deuteronomy, put it in your margin, chapter 20 verse 8, "And the officers shall speak further unto the people, and they shall say, 'What man is there that is fearful and fainthearted? Let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart.'" God says, "If there's a war, those who are afraid, just get rid of them. Not only will they not make good soldiers, but they're going to infect others."

Two preachers were talking. The one said, "Do you have any committees in your church?" He said, "I



have all kinds of committees,” and they were talking about different kind of committees. One preacher said, “I bet you don’t have a cold water committee, a bucket committee.” He said, “What is that?” He said, “Well, anytime anybody has a good idea, the bucket committee comes and pours cold water on it.” “Oh,” he said, “Yeah, I’ve got that committee. I can tell you who the chairman is.” There are people who think that it can’t be done, and they’re going around telling everybody else why it cannot be done.

Now are you a fearful person? Well, you say, “Pastor Rogers, there’s some things to be afraid of.” I’m not talking about normal fears, like being afraid of a rattlesnake or getting in an airplane when the weather gets rough and your heart rate goes up. Those are normal fears. That’s a self-protecting instinct that God has put into us. You look both ways when you cross the street. Those are normal fears. They’re like a thunderstorm that comes and then it’s over. But the Bible speaks of a spirit of fear. Have you ever seen people with a spirit of fear? Second Timothy 1 verse 7, “God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” What is the spirit of fear? It’s like a fog. It just stays and it lingers in the air. It’s not like a thunderstorm and then the sun comes back out. “God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and love, and of a sound mind.” If you’re a child of God filled with the Holy Spirit, God has given you the Spirit of power. Jesus said in Acts 1:8, “Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.” I had rather die than be sentenced to preach without the power and the anointing of the Holy Ghost. God hath given us the spirit of power and of love.

Did you know love removes fear? The question is not are you brave enough; the question is do you love enough? Friend, I tell you what. I’m not, by nature, courageous. Well, maybe I am a little bit, by nature. But if you come after one of my loved ones, you’re going to face one of the bravest men you’ve ever seen, one of the bravest men you’ve ever seen. If you were to start after my wife or one of my children, friend, you’d be facing a brave man. Do you know why? Because I love them! Do you love the Lord? “God hath given us the Spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” And that word sound mind literally means a mind that cannot be stampeded. It means a mind that sees things as they are, not afraid of phantoms, not afraid of spooks, not stampeded by the sinister minister of fear, who is the devil. Get filled with the Spirit of God and you’re going to have not only an assurance that God can use you, but you’re going to find yourself unusually courageous.

Now here’s the next kind of person that God uses. **God uses cautious people.** You say, “That’s contradictory.” No, it’s not. Look now, if you will, here in Judges chapter 7 verses 4 through 8, “And the Lord said unto Gideon, ‘The people are yet too many. Bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there. And it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, ‘This shall go with thee,’ the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I shall say unto thee, ‘This shall not go with thee,’ the same shall not go.’ So he brought down the people unto the water. And the Lord said unto Gideon, ‘Everyone that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise everyone that boweth down on his knees to drink.’ And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men; but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water. And the Lord said unto Gideon, ‘By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand; and let all the other people go every man unto his own place.’ So the Lord took victuals in their hand, so the people took victuals,” that’s food, “and their trumpets. And he sent all of the rest of Israel, every man, unto his tent, and retained those three hundred men, and the host of Midian was beneath him in the valley.”



Now God says, "All right, Gideon, you've sent the fearful home. Now, Gideon, there's another test. Bring the people down here to the brook of Harod and tell them to drink water." It's hot in that valley. I've been in that valley. I've been to this very brook. And he said, "All right, men break ranks and get a drink of water." Now the people began to divide themselves, these ten thousand that were left. There were some men who got down, put their mouths in the water, and began to suck up the water. Can you imagine how vulnerable a man would be to the enemy like this with his neck bared? And the Bible says the enemy was right up there. There they are. Down with their mouths in the water, sucking up the water. There were three hundred men, however, who drank putting their hand to their mouth, looking around. These were cautious men. They were cautious men.

You say, "I thought we wanted courageous men?" Yes, courageous and cautious. I love the balance of the Bible. The Bible says in Philippians 1:28, "In nothing be terrified by your adversaries," but the same Bible says First Peter 5 verse 8, "Be sober, be vigilant; your adversary, the devil, goeth about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour." How careful we need to be. We don't just saunter forth and say, "There's nothing to be afraid of." Friend, we have a wicked, cruel, cunning, malevolent devil, and he's out there to sabotage your life. So the Bible says in Luke chapter 21 verse 36, "Watch and pray." Paul said in First Corinthians 9 verse 27, "I keep my body under. I buffet it. I don't give myself to things." You need to watch what you watch, what you see on television. You say, "Well, that doesn't bother me. I can look at naked women, it doesn't bother me." Is that what you believe, sir? One of three things is about you. Either you're no man, or you're Superman, or you're a liar. I believe the third one is true. No, Proverbs 6:27 says you can't take a fire in your bosom and be not burnt. You watch the company you keep. You watch the places that you go. I heard Billy Graham say on one occasion, "I stay frightened." Paul said in First Corinthians 2:3, "I was with you in weakness and fear and much trembling." There's an enemy, and he's real, and you need to stay on guard or God can't use you. Winston Churchill one time said, "We must be ready at our weakest possible moment to meet anything the enemy brings against us at his strongest possible moment."

Are you on guard? Do you know what sin often is? Sin is an unexpected opportunity, an unprotected life, and an undetected weakness. You put those together and you go down. The Bible says in First Corinthians 10:12, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." We must rush on.

God uses a cautious people. Friend, **God also uses a confident people.** Look, if you will, now in Judges chapter 7 verses 12 through 15, "And the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the children of the east lay along the valley like grasshoppers for multitude; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the seaside for multitude. And when Gideon was come, behold, there was a man that told a dream unto his fellow, and said, 'Behold, I dreamed a dream, and, lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent, and smote it that it fell, and overturned it, and the tent lay along.' And his fellow answered and said, 'This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon, the son of Joash, a man of Israel; for into his hand hath the Lord delivered Midian, and all the host.' And it was so, that when Gideon heard of the telling of the dream, and the interpretation thereof, that he worshipped, and returned unto the host of Israel, and said, 'Arise; for the Lord hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian.'"

Now what had happened is this; now here is a man. Here's a man who's a common man. Here's a man who is a courageous man. Here's a man who is a cautious man. But now he needs to be a confident man. He needs to understand that God is with him. So the Lord does something for him. He says, "Gideon, I





want you to get a buddy, and I want you to go into the camp of the enemy, and I want you to reconnoiter." "I want you to go down there into the camp. I want you to see what is happening."

And so, here goes Gideon, and he somehow slips past the guards, and he gets right into the middle of the camp of the Midianites. And he comes up to a tent and he hears two people in a tent talking. And Gideon is eavesdropping. One man said to the other man, "I had a terrible dream last night." He said, "What was it?" He said, "There was a loaf of barley bread, a barley roll of bread, and it came tumbling down the hill." And he said, "It hit a tent. And when it did, it knocked the whole tent down! The whole thing collapsed! Just a roll of barley bread." The other man said, "You know what that was? You know what you saw? That roll of barley bread, that was Gideon! That was Gideon." Gideon heard all of this. And the man said, "We've lost. Why, that's just Gideon! We've lost."

Now think about it; barley bread. Friend, barley bread was the poorest bread you could get. It wasn't whole wheat. It wasn't vitamin enriched. That was poor man's bread. And it comes tumbling down and destroys the whole thing. When Gideon heard that, he went back and said, "Fellows, we've won. We have won."

Listen, let me tell you something. There is a dread in Hell over you. You say, "Me? I'm just barley bread." That's the point. The devil hopes that you never really understand who you are or what you have in the Lord Jesus Christ. You say, "I'm just a piece of barley bread." That's right. Listen to me. I have seen people too big in their own sight for God to use; I've never seen a man small in his own sight that God could not use. God wants to take ordinary people and do extraordinary things through ordinary people. Now you make certain that your heart is clean; you're filled with the Spirit.

A tiger met a lion as they sat beside the pool, said the tiger to the lion, "Why are you roaring like a fool?" "Ha, ha, that's not foolish," said the lion with a twinkle in his eyes, "They call me the king of all beasts because I advertise." A rabbit heard them talking, ran home like a streak, he thought he'd try the lion's plan, but his roar was just a squeak. A fox came to investigate, had his lunch in the woods. And so, my friend, when you advertise, be sure you've got the goods.

Now listen, you do have the goods if your heart is clean. If you're filled with the Holy Spirit, you may be only a piece of barley bread, but God is going to use you. There is a dread in Hell that one of these days God's people are going to wake up as to who they are and what we have in the Lord Jesus.

Those people in that tent were already afraid. That's the devil's crowd. They knew Gideon. Gideon was known in Hell. Are you known in Hell? I want my name to be on the bulletin board in Hell. I want it to be in Hell's post office. "There he is Adrian Rogers! He's dangerous. He's just barley bread, but he's dangerous." Friend, you can't have your name posted in Heaven's Hall of Champions unless you have it posted in Hell's post office of enemies. Gideon was known in Hell.

There was a man tried to cast some demons out in the Book of Acts, in chapter 19 verses 11 through 17, well, actually seven of them, seven sons of Sceva, Sceva and Sons, going out there, exorcists to cast demons out. And they came against a man who was filled with demons. And the man in whom the demons were turned on these men, stripped their clothes from them, beat them up. They ran like whipped puppies, naked, fleeing. What had happened is this: they said to this demon-possessed man, "We adjure you in the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, come out of him." That's second-hand religion. They didn't say,



“In the name of Jesus, whom I know.” “In the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches,” that’s second-hand religion. You can’t say, “In the name of Jesus that Adrian preaches.” You have to say, “In the name of Jesus, whom I know.” Do you know what the demons said? This is really funny. The demons said to these seven, “Yeah, Jesus I know and Paul I know; who are you? Who are you?” And they’re running because their name was not known in Hell. Your name needs to be known in Hell. The demons need to know that you’re somebody, an ordinary person, barley bread, common, courageous, cautious, confident that God can use you.

God gave victory that day. Would you like to live in victory, or you just want it written of you, “There was man born, he lived, he died?” Folks, what difference is it going to make? What is your life going to count for? Don’t you give me that business that you’re just an ordinary person! Don’t you tell me you’re too old, too young, too poor, too uneducated! First Corinthians 1:26, “You see your calling, brethren, not many mighty, not many noble are called.”

Now God may not use you the way He uses somebody else. You let God decide that. You don’t choose your place of service. But you make yourself available to God and God will use you. I believe that. Do you believe it?

Let’s bow our heads. Father God, I pray in the name of Jesus that You will help us Lord, as a church, as individuals. Lord to be surrendered to You. Lord, useable in the battle. And Father to bring glory to Jesus.

Now while heads are bowed and eyes are closed, I’ve been speaking today to God’s children. I’ve been speaking today to those who are saved, not to the unsaved, but to the saved. Now before you can be used of God in any of these other ways I’ve mentioned, first of all you’ve got to know Jesus as your personal Savior and Lord. Let me tell you this, that we’re sinners; sinners by birth, by nature, by choice and by practice. Our sin deserves judgment, but God wants to save us and God will save us; anybody who will trust Him.

The Bible says it clearly and plainly, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.” What do you believe about Jesus? That He did for your sins, that He shed His blood for you. That He was raised from the dead. That He is willing and able to save you and will save you.

Would you pray a prayer like this? “Oh God, I am a sinner, I am lost, I can’t save myself. But now today with all of my heart, like a little child, I trust You to save me. Come into my life. Forgive my sin, cleanse me and save me. And thank You for doing it. And help me to never be ashamed of You. Take all there is of me and use me for Your glory.” Amen.





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