

# “We Can Overcome Our Fears!”

*Judges 6:11-24*

**Intro.** – Ann Landers would receive 10,000 letters per month when she was writing her syndicated newspaper column. Most of these letters were from people with burdens and problems. Landers was asked once if there was any one problem that was predominate over the other. She replied, “People are afraid of losing their health, wealth, their loved ones etc. People are afraid of life itself.”

A German and a Russian were fishing on opposite banks of the same river. The German was catching fish after fish while the Russian wasn’t even getting a bite. Finally, the Russian yelled across, “Why is it you catch fish and I get nei?” German replied, “I guess on your side the fish are afraid to open their mouths.”

We know Jesus said in Matthew 6, “*Don’t be anxious about tomorrow...*” Doing this is no easy task. Fear stalks us constantly. It robs us of sleep, ruins our health, and destroys our testimony. Valium, a tranquilizer, was the number one prescription drug in America for years. In the early 90’s it was replaced by Tagament, a drug for ulcers. Yes, ours is an age of anxiety. Why, we even fear the food we eat. How many times a week do we hear such and such is good for us... is bad for us...”

Illus. – poem (author is unknown)

Methuselah ate what he found on his plate,  
And never, as people do now,  
Did he note the amount of the calorie count;  
He ate it because it was chow.

He wasn’t disturbed as a dinner he sat,  
Devouring a roast or a pie,  
To think it was lacking in granular fat,  
Or a couple of vitamins shy.”

He cheerfully chewed each species of food,  
Unmindful of troubles or fears  
Lest his health might be hurt  
By some fancy dessert;  
And he lived over 900 years.

An applicant for a job as a night watchman at an art gallery was asked, “If a fire broke out and your could save one painting, which would it be?” He responded, “The one nearest the exit!” You and I can identify with this guy’s instinct for *self preservation* can’t we?

*Purpose: to learn we can in fact overcome our fears*

I use the above to introduce our text. Gideon is one of the best examples of one who overcame his fears. Ordinary and cowardly can be describe Gideon at first. But, he learned to trust God and eventually became a man of great courage. His account (our text) will affirm in our minds that we really can overcome our fears!

## **I Our TASK from God**

- in a general sense our task from God is simple – WIN and BUILD “in Christ”... ambassadors for Him!
- each of us have abilities/talents that differ... but, in concert we can accomplish the task given to us...

### **A. Where We Are Now**

#### **1. Ours is an anxious, fearful world...**

- Illus. – all of us are to a certain extent like the guy who bought \$100,000.00 life insurance policy before a plane trip. Then stepped onto one those scales in airports. Out popped his “fortune” = “A recent investment will pay big dividends.”

#### **2. Gideon lived in like times:**

- a. 7 yrs Midianites were terrorizing Israel (6:1-6) = petrified!
- b. the angel of the Lord appeared/gave Gideon task leading Israel in battle against the Midianites

- c. Gideon was afraid... why he was beating wheat in wine press instead of above ground.
- d. *“The Lord is with you, mighty warrior...”* – picture this event! “Mighty warrior?!” Gideon? Hardly picture him as *mighty* let alone as a *warrior*...

#### B. Where We Have Been

- 1. Gideon had heard how God miraculously delivered Israel from Egypt... plagues... parting water of Red Sea... drowning of Egyptian army... etc.
- 2. 6:13 – If the Lord is with us, then why is this happening? Where are the miracles today?!...
- 3. All of us have felt and think this way at times:
  - a. we know the promises of God’s presence and strength are solid...
  - b. yet, there are times we stumble in trust in Him...
- 4. 6:14 *“...am I not sending you?”* – the point being: God NEVER sends anyone with a job to do without providing power, resources and the ability to do it and to do it right!

#### C. Who We Really Are

- 1. Gideon asked the same question (excuse) we ask – “How can I do it. I’m from an insignificant family... the youngest to boot?”
- 2. Point: we think feelings of inadequacy exempts us from involvement... we think the lack of confidence is showing God our humility.
- 3. Humility is not low self-image and from this text we learn that God is not at all impressed with our feelings of insecurity and inferiority...
- 4. 6:16 = God plus one = majority... Romans 8 says, *“If God be for us, who can be against us?”*
- 5. You may be the only Christian in your family... work... school... God is making clear He will use us no matter how insignificant and inadequate we think of ourselves...

We are children of the King. We are instruments of righteousness in the hands of Mighty God. We are ambassadors for Christ. We are God’s highest creation. We are the purchased of God. We are sons and daughters of God. We are the “called out ones” the Bride of Christ. We are soldiers of the Cross. We are us Christians. We are saints. We are the light in a world of darkness. We are the redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. We are His! Knowing this and more will help us with our task from God!

## II Our TEST for God

- 6:17 *“...show me a sign that is You who speaks to me.”* – the *mighty warrior* is still afraid; so, God gives several “signs”
- Matthew 12:39 *“An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign.”* This explains the preoccupation our times have with the miraculous today = proof, proof, proof or TESTS for God.

#### A. Proof Was Given

- 1. Gideon offered sacrifice as he was instructed = fire consuming rock and Gideon realizes The Angel of the Lord put him “face to face” with God! Told he would not die.
- 2. Same night, 2<sup>nd</sup> built an altar to the Lord by tearing down the altar of Baal and the Asherah pole (female deity from the altar of Baal) and offered a sacrifice on it.
  - a. did this at night (6:27) for fear of detection during daylight
  - b. Joash (dad of Gideon) defends his son... = courage is contagious...
- 3. Gideon blows trumpet and people come ready to fight – 32,000 strong
- 4. Puts out the fleece (2 times) and learns there is no mistake, God is with him!

#### B. Proof is Given

- 1. As for our circumstances – God has proven His love for us...; yet, people “put out the fleece” to determine God’s will in their life to the neglect of His Word
- 2. God has not promised a special revelation to us other than what He says in His Word
  - a. to expect otherwise is an indication of lack of trust
  - b. preoccupation with the miraculous to the exclusion of His Word = “evil and adulterous generation who seeks signs...

- c. Such reducing the Bible to something “nice” but not compete, final or all sufficient...!

### III Our TRUST in God

- Gideon does overcome his fear – let me condense rest of Gideon’s account (chap 7) into two things he did that make the application for this message to you and me:

#### A. Gideon Believed God

1. Means he trusted God completely = saw enough evidence to trust the Lord implicitly.
2. What God ask of us – to examine the evidence, believe and put our trust in His care (cf. Mt 6):
  - ever seen an anorexia sparrow? Ever see a flower fret over the lack of moisture/sunshine? ever see a jealous rose...?
3. What more does God have to do to convince us He means exactly what He says?
4. Plaque summarizes it: “Lord, help me to remember that nothing is going to happen to me today that You and I can’t handle together.”

To overcome our fears we’re going to have to trust God completely!

#### B. Gideon Took Action

1. Obedient action is the 2<sup>nd</sup> thing Gideon did to overcome fear!
2. When God said, “Go!” even though there remained a degree of fear, Gideon did go!
  - a. note: courage is not the absence of fear – if there is no element of fear no need for courage.
  - b. courage is being afraid BUT proceeding anyway!
3. Gideon was instructed to get more assurance... sent to camp of Midianites... heard account of a dream... upon hearing Gideon (7:15) “*bowed in worship.*”
4. Went back from this and TOOK ACTION = “*sword for the Lord and for Gideon!*”
5. Question: Do we trust God enough to take action? Only when we start acting on faith will fear diminish...!

Overcome fear = taking action ON faith!!

**Conclusion:** Roy Coop resolved to become a preacher of the Gospel. He entered Bible College just when WW II starting. Most of his high school friends were drafted or joined up. Behind Roy’s back he heard, “ducking his duty” or “taking the coward’s way out.” Approaching a group one day he heard, “Here comes chicken Roy. Going off to sissy college because he’s afraid.” Addressing the group, “I have joined an army the rest of you wouldn’t have the courage to join.”

Roy Coop went to Bible College and became a preacher of the Gospel. He faithfully served our Lord and His Church for years. He became the president of Minnesota Bible College.

Let me use illustrate the summary and point to this passage/message. It takes great courage to be enlisted in the Lord’s army and to live counter to the trends of our culture. But Proverbs 28:1 summarizes well this text and the two main points of overcoming our fears: “*The wicked flee when no one is pursuing, but the righteous are bold as a lion.*”