

## IT'S TIME TO GET OUT OF YOUR RUT

TEXT: (Judges 6:11-16, NIV)

<sup>11</sup>The angel of the LORD came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites. <sup>12</sup>When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said, “The LORD is with you, mighty warrior.”

<sup>13</sup>“But sir,” Gideon replied, “if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our fathers told us about when they said, ‘Did not the LORD bring us up out of Egypt?’ But now the LORD has abandoned us and put us into the hand of Midian.”

<sup>14</sup>The LORD turned to him and said, “Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian’s hand. Am I not sending you?”

<sup>15</sup>“But LORD,” Gideon asked, “how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family.”

<sup>16</sup>The LORD answered, “I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites together.”

### INTRODUCTION:

#### A. Gideon Got Out of His Rut

1. “Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD, and for seven years he gave them into the hands of the Midianites” (Judges 6:1, NIV).
2. “Midian so impoverished the Israelites that they cried out to the LORD for help” (Judges 6:6, NIV).

### I. THE LORD HAD TO CONVINCING GIDEON

#### A. Gideon Could See Only His Limitations

1. “Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him” (I Corinthians 1:26-29, NIV).

#### B. Gideon Needed Assurance

1. “Gideon said to God, ‘If you will save Israel by my hand as you have promised—look, I will place a wool fleece on the threshing floor. If there is dew only on the fleece and all the ground is dry, then I will know that you will save Israel by my hand, as you said.’ And that is what happened. Gideon rose early the next day; he squeezed the fleece and wrung out the dew—a bowlful of water.  
Then Gideon said to God, ‘Do not be angry with me. Let me make just one more request. Allow me one more test with the fleece. This time make the fleece dry and the ground covered with dew.’ That night God did so. Only the fleece was dry; all the ground was covered with dew” (Judges 6:36-40, NIV).
2. “The Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord, and for seven years he gave them into the hands of the Midianites. Because the power of Midian was so oppressive, the Israelites prepared shelters for themselves in mountain clefts, caves and strongholds” (Judges 6:1-2, NIV).

#### C. God’s Call Is Greater Than Your Limitations

1. “‘But LORD,’ Gideon asked, ‘how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family’” (Judges 6:15, NIV).
2. “But Moses said, ‘O LORD, please send someone else to do it.’  
Then the LORD’S anger burned against Moses” (Exodus 4:13-14, NIV).

3. "The LORD turned to him and said, 'Go in the strength you have'" (Judges 6:14, NIV).
4. "There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear" (I John 4:18, NIV).
5. "We live by faith, not by sight" (II Corinthians 5:7, NIV).
6. "The LORD turned to him and said, 'Go in the strength you have'" (Judges 6:14, NIV).

## II. THE LORD USES ONLY WHAT WE GIVE HIM

### A. We Must Be Willing

1. "The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God" (Romans 7:6-8, NIV).
2. "The LORD turned to him and said, 'Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand. Am I not sending you?'" (Judges 6:14).

### B. What Do You Have in Your Hand

1. "Moses answered, 'What if they do not believe me or listen to me and say, "The LORD did not appear to you?'"

Then the LORD said to him, 'What is that in your hand?'

'A staff,' he replied" (Exodus 4:1-2, NIV).

2. "Gideon and the hundred men with him reached the edge of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, just after they had changed the guard. They blew their trumpets and broke the jars that were in their hands. The three companies blew the trumpets and smashed the jars. Grasping the torches in their left hands and holding in their right hands the trumpets they were to blow, they shouted, 'A sword for the LORD and for Gideon!' While each man held his position around the camp, all the Midianites ran, crying out as they fled" (Judges 7:19-21, NIV).

### C. God Honored Gideon's Faith

1. "When the three hundred trumpets sounded, the LORD caused the men throughout the camp to turn on each other with their swords" (Judges 7:22, NIV).
2. "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (I Corinthians 1:21, NIV).

## III. GOD WILL USE YOU

### A. Be Available

1. "Then I heard the voice of the LORD saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?'"
- And I said, 'Here am I. Send me!'" (Isaiah 6:8, NIV).

### B. Be Obedient

1. "And Samuel said, Hath the LORD *as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey *is* better than sacrifice, *and* to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion *is as* the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from *being* king" (I Samuel 15:22-23, KJV).
2. "Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. Therefore do not be partners with them"(Ephesians 5:6-7, NIV).

## CONCLUSION:

1. "Thus Midian was subdued before the Israelites and did not raise its head again. During Gideon's lifetime, the land enjoyed peace forty years" (Judges 8:28, NIV).