

Unlikely Heroes

Scripture Reading — Judges 6:1-14

When the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, he said, “The Lord is with you, mighty warrior.” — Judges 6:12

In this story, Gideon goes on to become a successful military leader (see Judges 7). But that’s surprising when we consider how the story begins.

The angel of the Lord greets Gideon with the words, “The Lord is with you, mighty warrior.” But where is Gideon when the angel greets him? Polishing his armor? Mustering the troops? No. He’s threshing grain in a winepress, hiding out from marauding Midianites, who are a constant threat to the Israelites at that time. So Gideon is not acting like a mighty warrior but more like a coward.

Repeatedly we see Gideon as timid and uncertain, but we should not be too hard on him. His anxiety and hesitation simply highlight the fact that God is setting him up with impossible odds. By using Gideon and just a small army, even though many thousands of soldiers were available (Judges 7:3, 8), God is teaching his people that the battle belongs to the Lord. When Gideon and his men finally enter the Midianite camp at night, smashing clay jars, carrying torches, and blowing trumpets, God himself routs the enemies of Israel.

Weak men and fragile jars point to the coming of the Lord and Savior as a helpless, human baby. The battle belongs to the Lord.

Prayer

By ourselves we are like clay jars, Lord, and only in you, Jesus, can we become mighty warriors of your kingdom. Frail though we are, please use us for the coming of your kingdom and your glory. Amen.

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Printed on August 19, 2019

