Man of Valor?

"And the angel of the LORD appeared to him and said to him, 'The LORD is with you, O mighty man of valor.'" (Judges 6:12, ESV)

There is something almost humorous about that greeting.

Gideon was not standing at the head of an army. He was not charging into battle. He was not doing anything that looked particularly courageous.

He was hiding.

Midian had so oppressed Israel that the Israelites were hiding their crops from them. Gideon was beating out wheat in a winepress so the Midianites would not see him.

Wheat was normally threshed in an open place where the wind could separate the chaff from the grain. Gideon was down in a winepress trying to do secretly what ordinarily needed wind and open space.

Then the angel of the LORD appeared.

"The LORD is with you, O mighty man of valor."

Mighty man of valor?

He was hiding in a winepress.

Perhaps there is even a touch of divine humor in the words. But there is also something profound.

God was calling Gideon to deliver Israel from Midian, and Gideon immediately explained why he was the wrong man.

"Please, Lord, how can I save Israel? Behold, my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house." (Judges 6:15, ESV)

Gideon looked at himself and saw weakness.

God did not disagree with Gideon's assessment by telling him that somewhere deep inside he possessed abilities he had never discovered. He did not give Gideon a lesson in self-confidence.

God gave him something much better.

"But I will be with you." (Judges 6:16, ESV)

That changed everything.

Moses had responded similarly when God called him. Moses complained that he was not eloquent but was *"slow of speech and of tongue."* God answered, *"Who has made man's mouth?"* Then He said, *"Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth."* (Exodus 4:10–12, ESV)

God does not always call people because they possess the obvious abilities necessary for the assignment.

Sometimes He seems almost deliberately to do the opposite.

Paul wrote, *"God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong."* (1 Corinthians 1:27, ESV)

God demonstrated that dramatically with Gideon. After calling this unlikely warrior, God reduced Gideon's army until only three hundred men remained. Why?

"Lest Israel boast over me, saying, 'My own hand has saved me.'" (Judges 7:2, ESV)

God intended there to be no confusion about who delivered Israel.

There is considerable comfort in that.

Sometimes God places work before us that seems beyond our ability. We know our limitations better than anyone else. We know where we are weak. We know what we cannot do. We may even be entirely correct in our assessment.

But perhaps we are answering the wrong question.

The question is not always, "Am I capable of doing this?"

Gideon wasn't.

The better question may be, "Has God called me to do this, and will He provide what is necessary?"

God does not need our strength in order to accomplish His purposes. He can supply what we lack, strengthen what is weak, and work through our inadequacy in ways that leave no question about who deserves the glory.

Gideon looked at himself and saw the least man from the weakest clan.

God saw a mighty man of valor.

Not because Gideon was stronger than he realized.

Because God was going with him.

Just a thought.

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