

Day 13 – Feb. 15

Gideon is one of my all time favorite characters, possibly because I identify so much with him. Gideon is a fearful, small man used by God to do enormous things. Unlike Ehud the warrior or Deborah the Prophetess, Gideon is just the son of a small family in a tiny clan of an oppressed people. And he is afraid. From threshing wheat in a winepress – a completely useless activity that just allows him to seem busy while he hides in fear – to his night-time raid of the false gods of his people, from the tests he poses to God to make God prove Himself to the need to sneak into the enemy camp just to gain some assurance that they might win, Gideon lets his fear drive him again and again.

And yet God uses him again and again. God calls him, “Mighty hero” and calls him “in the strength you have” to defeat the raging hordes surrounding his people. And in spite of his fear, Gideon does! He brings the whole army of 32000 men, and God weeds out first 22000 of them, and then another 9700 more. And so with 300 men, Gideon obeys God and, well lets be frank, God defeats the Midianite army for Gideon.

And even after reading this and so many biblical stories like it, both OT and NT, we still stubbornly stick to the idea that “bigger is better”, that we have to work within our own strength, and that we never have enough. This scarcity mindset kept Israel mired in fear to the Midianites until Gideon refused to believe it and took the strength he had – not much to be honest – and the men God gave him – 300 at the final count – and defeated their enemy. When will we ever learn that what God has called us to do, He has also equipped us for, regardless of our fear, our self-doubt, and our scarcity mindset? God will win the battle, and He doesn't need our might, wisdom, strength, youth, or experience. He only needs our obedience.