



The Named in Hebrews 11

Devotion

“And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets—who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouth of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.”

Hebrews 11:32-34

Barak put foreign armies to flight. Jephthah enforced justice. David conquered kingdoms and became mighty in war. Jephthah escaped the sword. Gideon was made strong out of weakness.

In the stories of Gideon and Samson (and David! And...well just keep reading the Bible!), the Lord doesn't call people because of their righteousness. We sometimes lift up these long ago servants of God as having been extraordinarily good or worthy. Instead, they remind us that God doesn't call us because we're strong. God doesn't call us because our behavior is excellent. God shows us in Scripture, again and again, that He doesn't call the equipped—He equips the called.

When God called Gideon to lead and rule and fight as a judge of oppressed Israel, he was hiding, doing work normally done in the open, outside in the daylight. Instead, he was hidden in a winepress so that Israel's oppressors wouldn't see and steal his wheat. Gideon wasn't called by God because of his courage—God chose to work THROUGH Gideon's weakness and miraculously deliver God's people out of the strength of the Lord, despite a small, weakened army. After Gideon's story of cowardice, we see stories of great courage, obedience, and leadership, followed by miracles that give glory to God alone.

Though Samson stopped the mouths of lions, he was also a selfish sinner, ruled by the sin that clung so closely to him. God used His strength to destroy thousands of Philistines in a truly selfless act in which Samson was willing to give his own life to serve the Lord and save his people. Despite Samson's continual indulgence in sin, his foolishness and his arrogance, God worked through him and gave him strength—the very gift Samson had shown so much sinful pride in and reliance on before his humbling capture.

God has given us vocations no matter what weighs you down and no matter how tempted you are by the sin which clings so closely, God has claimed, loved and forgiven you. Jesus has not only redeemed you, but He promises to work through and in your weakness to bring glory to Himself.

Questions

- How have you seen God show His strength in weakness?
- What weighs you down and makes you feel like God couldn't use you because you're not strong enough?
- What sin continually tempts you enough that you feel unworthy of Jesus' love?

Prayer: Dear Jesus, thank you for the gift of faith. Please use my life and my actions, not for my name, not for my story, not for my glory, but for yours and yours alone. In Jesus' name, Amen.