

## OVERCOMING FAILURE (3)

**Introduction:** Read 2 Corinthians 12:7-10. Our present series is an extended examination of Paul's announcement: *"When I am weak then I am strong."*

1. Paul writes that in order that he might not exalt himself above others that God sent him *"a thorn in the flesh. . .to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure"* (2 Cor. 12:7b). Though Paul petitioned the Lord three times to remove the thorn, God assured him, *"My grace is sufficient for you."*
2. Moses is the only Bible character that is called "meek" (Num. 12:1-3; KJV; ASV). Yet in his early years, Moses was anything but meek ("strength under control"). Moses had a hot temper (Exod. 2:11-14; 32:15-20; Num. 20:2-13).
3. Though Abraham is the father of the faithful (Gal. 3:9), he showed little faith when he lied to Pharaoh on two occasions about Sarah being not his wife

### D. GIDEON: TIMIDITY TURNED INTO VALOR.

1. After Joshua's death Israel forgot God and fell into idolatry. Consequently God allowed her enemies (Mesopotamia, Moabites, Ammonites, Amalekites, Philistines, and Midianites) to oppress Israel for 200 years until the time of Gideon (Judg. 2:20-23; 3:7-11). Israel *"was brought very low"* (Judg. 6:1-6; READ).
2. We are introduced to Gideon in Judges 6:11-18 (READ). The word valor means "strength of mind or spirit, which enables a man to encounter danger with firmness; personal bravery."
  - a. When God called him, Gideon was not a man of valor for he was threshing wheat in the winepress in order to hide it from the Midianites (6:11).
  - b. Like Moses, he objected to leading his people out from under oppression: *" . . .the Lord has forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites. . .how can I save Israel? . . .my clan is the weakest in Manasseh."* His father had an altar to Baal and a wooden idol (6:25).
  - c. Gideon tore down his father's shrine and built an altar to Jehovah, but he did it at night, *"because he feared his father's household and the men of the city too much to do it by day"* (6:27). Is Gideon good material?
3. Yet Gideon is named among the faithful judges of Hebrews 11:32-34 *"who through FAITH subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, [34] quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, OUT OF WEAKNESS WERE MADE STRONG, BECAME VALIANT IN BATTLE... ."*
4. In actuality God could work through Gideon because he was a humble man.
  - a. Gideon was conscious of his weakness. "Men who are worthy to do such work as his are never forward to begin it, nor backward in it when they are sure it is God's will" [A. Maclaren]. Success depends on faith in God.
  - b. Israel must learn too! In battle God reduced an army from 32,000 to 300! Why? *"When I am weak then am I strong."* What can God do with me?

Sunday Morning

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