

Monday, March 30

Judges 6:15-16 *“But Lord,” Gideon replied, “how can I rescue Israel? My clan is the weakest in the whole tribe of Manasseh, and I am the least in my entire family!” The LORD said to him, “I will be with you.”*

How do we live life without feeling overwhelmed? How do we get through the challenges of each day when we often don't “feel” we're even able to clearly understand what the issues, or what our resources, are?

Gideon was between a rock and a hard place. God had chosen him to be a leader in a life or death situation, but Gideon had reservations about both his abilities and his value.

The *Message* paraphrase interprets Gideon's words this way: *Look at me. My clan's the weakest in Manasseh and I'm the runt of the litter.*

Gideon was shackled by his family of origin issues as well as by the self-definition of his life and character. “My family is insignificant and undistinguished, and I have physical limitations that make me essentially useless to anyone.”

In that brief dialogue Gideon only sees himself, he only hears the lies that he tells himself about who he is (and maybe lies others told him), and as a result he's not able to listen to the truth God is speaking to him: *I will be with you.*

This promise is given to us in the New Testament as well. Hebrews 13:5 *For God has said, “I will never fail you. I will never abandon you.”*

And Jesus promised (Matthew 28:20) *And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.*

Shouldn't that make a difference in how we respond to the opportunities and the obstacles that we face?

One summer between my junior and senior years in high school I worked for the parks and recreation department in my hometown. One of my responsibilities was to maintain the local park where I provided games and activities for the kids in the surrounding neighborhoods.

One afternoon my boss stopped by and asked me to give an “order” to the fulltime workers who were at the park to clean up a certain area. Now, I'm 17 years old and these “men” were long-time employees who didn't have much respect for a wet-behind-the-ears summer employee. I told them what the boss said, and their reply was, “We don't have to do what you tell us.” Just then the boss walked out from behind a storage shed and said, “Yes, you do because I'm the authority behind what Fred said to you.” And they complied.

No matter what lies the world says about you, no matter what Satan whispers to you, the ultimate authority has your back. *I am with you always. Do not fear.*

That declaration changes . . . everything.