



GIDEON: FEAR TO COURAGE

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Libin Abraham

(The following text is automatically generated and has not been edited)

Libin Abraham 0:00

Now, I've been a dad for about 10 years, which I know is like peanuts compared to many of you, man, who've been a dad way longer than I have been, but I think naturally a question we might ask or wrestle with at some point is, Am I enough? Do I have what it takes? Am I enough as a dad? Am I enough as a husband? Am I enough for my family? Am I enough spiritually? Am I enough as a leader? Am I enough as a provider? And there may be some days you feel like you are, and you got it all right, and you figured it all out, and you feel on top of the world, and some days you fall a little short, or a lot short, and I'm right there with you. I remember specifically one moment in Houston. This was many years ago. Avery was about three years old at that time, and we had gotten invited to one of our previous church members' house in Houston, and we pulled up, and it was like the nicest house we had ever been to, and we had one of those circle driveways with waterfalls and all, and we look at this beautiful, magnificent house, Stacey, and I look at each other, and then we look at our toddler in the back, and we're thinking, uh, oh, this could be really bad. So we tell sweet Avery, honey, whatever you do, just please stay near us, don't touch anything, don't grab for anything, just stay with us, and we'll be okay. All right, we like to be invited back. We go in, and it was a standing home, like things were imported from every different country in the world, and it was amazing. And Avery did a good job, she was staying pretty close to us, and the further we got, I just kept my grip on her as quick as much as I can, and we were doing pretty good. I was feeling pretty good about my daddying that day. Then dessert comes, the meal was amazing, dessert shows up, and we're enjoying dessert, get carried away in conversation, and we look around, and Avery is not there to be found, and we said, "Oh, where did she go? And not 20 seconds later, we hear this massive crash in the living room. We rushed in to see what happened, and what had happened was what had happened was there was this rocking horse on this family's coffee table. I think that's a whole new level of wealth when you can just have like this massive steel rocking horse, but in front of the rocking horse was a beautiful glass vase. Of course, what toddler is not going to see a rocking horse and just push that little rocking horse, and that's what Avery had done. And, of course the rocking horse had swung right into the vase, and the vase shattered. Everyone ran over to make sure everyone was okay, and I pulled out my calculator to see how much this was going to cost me to replace, and that's when we moved out of Houston and came to Ben Tree, because it was way more than I could afford. Totally felt like a dad fail, didn't feel like I had enough that day, and maybe you've had those moments as well as a dad, but maybe what was shattered was something that could not be replaced or fixed, and maybe that moment of what happened or what you did or happened to you has got you hiding in fear or in shame, that's you. I've got good news for you. Because we find a man in the Bible called Gideon, who is hiding, he's afraid, he's not leading, he's hiding in the wine press. And by now, in the story of Israel, the Israelites are in the Promised Land, but Moses is dead, Joshua's dead, and this generation of the people of God have completely forgotten him. In fact, they didn't just forget God, they have invited foreign gods, idols like Baal and his counterparts, that they would worship, and now they've given themselves over in devotion to foreign, fake, complete idolatry, so much so that God removed his hand of protection, and when God removes his hands of protection upon his people, they began to be attacked.

Libin Abraham 3:52

And for the last seven years now, the Israelites have been attacked by the Midianites. Now the Midianites were strategic, they didn't attack by invading and necessarily moving in and building their own governments, they attacked by raiding, so anytime it was harvest, they would come and take all the crops, they would come and take all the cattle and lay their land to waste, and now the people are afraid, and here's how the text records that in Judges chapter six verse one says the Israelites did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. So the Lord handed them over to Midian seven years, and they oppressed Israel. And because of Midian, the Israelites made hiding places for themselves in the mountains, caves and strongholds. Whenever

the Israelites planted crops, the Midianites, the Amalekites, and the people of the East came and attacked them. They encamped against them and destroyed the produce of the land, even as far as Gaza. They left nothing for Israel to eat, as well as no sheep, ox, or donkey for. The Midianites came with their cattle and their tents like a great swarm of locusts. They and their camels were without number. They entered the land to lay waste to it. So Israel became poverty-stricken because of Midian, and the Israelites cried out to the Lord that phrase, the Israelites became poverty-stricken, literally is the word. They became so small, they became small emotionally, spiritually, in every way you can imagine, they're experiencing smallness. They plant, and someone else reaps, they grow their cattle, and many nets, many nets are right there to take it, just when they're grown enough. No matter what they do, they're being attacked. This was economic warfare, where everything they had for the flourishing of the land is robbed and taken from them. And instead of building a defense mechanism, they build hideouts, and they hid in caves and in other places. I don't know if you've ever felt small, where you're working, you're trying, you're striving, and something keeps taking from you, maybe someone keeps taking from you. Well, here's a whole nation for seven years, poverty-stricken and feeling small, and in that nation is a man named Gideon. And when we are first introduced to Gideon, Gideon is fighting, Gideon isn't leading. Guess what, Gideon is doing, he is hiding, he's hiding in the wine press because he is afraid of the Midianites. Here's Gideon's story, in verse 11, the angel of the Lord came, and he sat under the oak that was in Orphra. I always want to say Oprah, but it's Oprah, which belonged to Joash. Joash is Gideon's dad, the Abiezrite. His son Gideon was threshing wheat in the wine press in order to hide it from the Midianites. Now, if you've got some agricultural background, you're thinking this is an absurd scene. It's a strange scene. Why? Because you don't thresh wheat in wine presses. The way you thresh wheat was on hilltops, because you would press the grain or thrust the wheat, and then you will literally throw it in the air for the chaff to be blown with the wind, and for the grain or the wheat to fall, that's how you separated grain from the chaff. But where is Gideon? He's not on the hilltop, where the wind is. He is at the lowest part of the city, in a wine thrust, which is dug into the ground, and there is no wind. That's not where you're supposed to thresh wheat, but that's the only option Gideon has. Why? Because he's hiding. He's afraid that if he shows up on the hilltop to thresh wheat, the Midianites will see him and spot him, and they'll attack, taking everything from him. So, out of fear of the Midianites, he's hiding in the wine press, but he's not just hiding out of fear, he's also hiding out of doubt. He's hiding because he's doubting God, and he's doubting himself. In fact, here's what verse 13 says: when the angel visits him, he says, If the Lord is with us, why has all this happened? Where's God been in the last seven years, when things haven't been going well, and we've been oppressed, and we're poverty-stricken. Where is God? Not only does he doubt God, he doubts himself, and God invites him to his plan. Here's what Gideon says. Please, Lord, how can I deliver Israel?

Libin Abraham 8:38

Look, my family is the weakest in the Manasseh, and I am the youngest in my family, in my father's family. I belong to the weakest clan, and I'm the youngest. I'm the weakest in my family. Surely, pick somebody else, Lord. Two questions that especially lead us to hiding: where is God, and who am I? Where is God, and who am I? Maybe you're a dad, maybe you're a guy, maybe you're a leader, and you fight these questions: where is God, where has He been, and who am I? And these two questions can often become sources of discouragement, causing us to find a wine press to hide in, because of fear or because of doubt, Gideon is there, hiding in the wine press, but guess what happens in the wine press. Gideon is called, God calls him out, God meets him in the wine press, where he's hiding. Verse 12 says this. Then the angel of the Lord appeared to him and said, The Lord is with you, valiant warrior. The Lord is with you, valiant warrior. I gotta appreciate how oxymoronic this is, because Gideon doesn't feel like a warrior, nevertheless a valiant, mighty warrior. Her Gideon doesn't look like one, doesn't feel like one. He's hiding in the wine press, and yet God sees him, and He calls him out, and He calls him valiant warrior, mighty warrior, man of valor. I love the fact that God can call us according to what He sees in us, even when we cannot see it in ourselves. In fact, we see ourselves according to our condition. We name ourselves according to our condition, but God sees ourselves. God names us not according to our condition, but according to His calling on our life. That's why God could come to a man who had no kids and call him Abraham, father of nations, before he saw kids in him. That's why God could come to Jacob and call him Israel, while Jacob was still deceiving and manipulating. That's why God could call Mary, the mother of the Lord, when she was still a young teenage girl and was virgin. That's why God could call Simon Peter, even when he was denying Jesus, because God often sees in us what we don't yet see in ourselves, that's who He is. I remember when I was about 19 years old and was struggling with this discerning of call and ministry, and finding myself in a hiding spot at a prayer night, one night, one of my friends looked at me dead in the eye, and he said, I see a pastor rising up in you. I had not yet seen that in myself, but God let me hear what He saw in me before I could see it in myself. God often will speak identity before ability. He'll speak identity before ability, and the reason why some of you have opted out of the calling of God, because all you've been looking at is ability. What can I do? What have I done? What am I

capable of? And when you look at your ability, you may want to go hide, you'll discount yourself, you'll disqualify yourself, but if you can only hear the identity statement that God talks about you with and calls you and names you, the ability He will build along the way, but He first begins with identity. Who is it that He calls you to be? And here is Gideon hiding in a wine press, but God comes and says you are a valiant warrior, and to all of Gideon's reasons to why he could not be chosen. Here is God's response, his answer to Gideon. Verse 14, the Lord turned to him and said, "Now notice this, it's not the angel anymore, is it? It's the Lord, God Himself has come to Gideon, and I just love the fact that God doesn't just meet people on the hilltops when you feel afraid and invisible and strong. We have a God who will descend down to the wine press, and He meets us in our weakness, He meets us in our fear, He meets us in our doubt. He would go from glory down into the wine press to speak to you, to find you, to call you out.

Libin Abraham 13:08

Here, Gideon is in the wine press, but God shows up, and He says, "Go in the strength you have and deliver Israel from the grasp of Midian. I am sending you. God is saying to Gideon, Gideon, it's never been about your strength anyway. It's about the fact that I'm sending you. So, the strength you have is the strength you need, because I'm the God sending you. I'm the one inviting you into something new that you haven't yet seen. Gideon continues to offer reason after reason, why he can be used of God. And here's what God says, but I will be with you, the Lord said to him. You will strike Midian down as if it were one man. Notice God's response to Gideon, and Gideon's questions and excuses and fears and doubts. God's answer to our inadequacy is simply his presence. What Gideon needed in that moment was not more explanation. What he needed was an encounter with the living God. What Gideon needed in that moment was not self-confidence. What he needed was God confidence. What would call Midian into the mission field, into the battlefield, was not feeling stronger, feeling more capable. What called him into the battlefield was recognizing who is with him, that the God of angel armies is on his side. He's not alone, God is sending him, and that's where courage was found. So, let me ask you a question, Mom or Dad, Tinguela Belt. Where do you find courage? Where do you find courage? If you look for courage within yourself, it won't be enough for God for what God is calling you to. If you look for courage in other people, they may be. Great examples around you, but people will fail if you look for courage in your track record and accomplishments in what you've done. Either you will find enough there, or that'll quickly turn to pride. Where do you find courage? Hear God's invitation to Gideon is, find courage in my presence. I'm with you. I'm sending you. Don't look anywhere else. Look at me. Keep your eyes, your heart, your soul fixed on me, because it's not about you feeling more capable or stronger. It's about you recognizing who is with you. And my Bible says, if God be for us, who can be against us, that is where courage is found. God finds Gideon in the hiding, God calls him man of valor, gives him courage, and then he's invited into obedience. The next step is obedience, but what's remarkable in the story is Gideon's first mission isn't to tear down the Midianites or to overthrow the enemies. No, no, it's far closer to home. He's actually invited to tear down idols at home. Look at verse 25 On that very night, the Lord said to him, take your father's young bull and a second bull, seven years old, interesting. Seven is the number of years that they've been oppressed. So he's invited to take a seven year old bull, then tear down the altar of Baal that belongs to your father, and cut down the Asherah pole beside it. Build a well constructed altar to the Lord your God on the top of this mount, so seems like a primary leader that led the Israelites into idol worship was none other than Gideon's dad, and now Gideon's first mission is to go and tear down the very idols that Gideon's dad set up. You know, it's Messieurs and his family, and here Gideon is. He's thinking, "Okay, send me to the Midianites. God says, "No, your first battle isn't to find an external enemy. Your first battle begins at home. It's to tear down, tear down internal idols, idols that have been passed down to you, idols may be set up by people who went before you. The first mission was to tear down idols at home. It's preparing this message.

Libin Abraham 17:46

I just felt so strongly today, on Father's Day, the sum of the things that God will call, especially some of you men to, is to tear down idols and strongholds that were established by your parents, I You don't have to keep tolerating subtle idols, you could be the first one God uses, and perhaps some of the greatest things God does in your life and through your life is to end a line of addiction, end the line of abuse, end the line of adultery and the line of unfaithfulness. It is to start something new and holy through you, and that you would not be a part of constructing another idol that gets passed down to your kids, that God could begin something new and holy through you, oftentimes we want to fight the enemy out there, but is there an idol at home? It could be a subtle idol. Sounds like a name of a song, doesn't it? A subtle idol, an idol you've gone comfortable with, an idol everyone has accepted around you could be in the rhythms and patterns of your home and family, where things are loved and devoted to and prioritized way more than God. And in North Texas, let me tell you, sports and extracurricular things can become an idol where we love it and devote ourselves to it more than God. Work can easily

become an idol, but we worship work more than God. Comfort, success, all of that could easily become idols. Good things even can become idols. Is there sin you're tolerating idols? We're making space and room for, and Gideon's first step, before he fought an enemy outside was to cleanse his home of idols, even though his own father has set them up, and I'm believing that some of you will begin a new line of freedom and hope in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that some of you. You will be the first to come to faith in Jesus and begin the worship of Almighty God in your home. How many of you would believe that and agree with that? Amen. Amen. So, here's what Gideon does. The next verse says, in verse 27 so Gideon took 10 of his male servants and did as the Lord had told him, I love this part, but because he was too afraid of his father's family and the man of the city to do it in the daytime, he did it at night. Sometimes, when you obey, don't wait for your fear to go away. Gideon was called. He obeyed. He was still afraid, too afraid to go do it in the daytime, so he did it at the night time, where no one would see him. And what it teaches us is that real courage is not the absence of fear, but trusting God, even when you are afraid. Don't wait until you're fearless to step into your calling. Don't wait until you're fearless to do what God has invited you to do. You may carry fear all your life, you may carry doubt all your life, but real courage is not having no fear or being fearless. Real courage is essentially having more trust than you have fear, even just a little bit more trust, then the amount of fear can go a long way. Gideon is too afraid to do it in the day, but he can do it at night. He's got enough faith for that, and that was good enough. So he tears down the altars at night and builds an altar to the Lord, but guess what happens. Sun comes up, the dawn comes, and the townspeople wake up to Baal and his altars being torn down, and they are livid. They investigate and find out that it's Gideon who's done this, and their hearts are so far away from God that they want to now kill the man who tore down the Baal altar, and they decide to find and kill Gideon. We know it's remarkable. Guess who comes to his defense? His dad. His dad. Look at verse 31 but Joash said to all who stood against him, "Would you plead Baal's case for him? Would you save him? Whoever pleads his case will be put to death by mourning. If he is a god, if Baal really is who he said he is, let him plead his own case, because someone tore down his altar.

Libin Abraham 22:43

Joash steps in and says, "Look, you want to kill my son, but you're trying to plead Baal's case, and Baal's not even trying to plead his case. So, why kill a man who tore down Baal's altar, and Baal's not even there to defend himself? So he says, 'Leave my son alone, let Baal defend himself. I love this moment, because the faith of the son has inspired the faith of his dad. I know sometimes it works the other way around, but sometimes it's the faith of kids that inspire your faith, and the first person that realized Baal is false, he's not the true God, is Gideon's dad. Gideon had just enough courage to tear down the altar at night, and as a response, his dad recognizes if Baal can't defend himself, then why would I defend him? And then Gideon gets a new name, he's already been renamed by God, by God calling him a valiant warrior. He felt afraid, he was hiding, but God says, "You are a valiant warrior. And now the very townspeople who came to kill Gideon, they've got a new name for him, and here's his new name in verse 32 That day Gideon was called Jerubal, since Joash said, "Let Baal contend with him, because he tore down his altar. That day the people who came to kill Gideon called him Jeroboam. And here's what Jeroboam means it simply means let Baal contend for himself, not all that creative, they just took the sentence and made it a name, Jeroboam, let Baal contend for himself, but this is actually pretty powerful, because what it means is that every time they called Gideon Jeroboam, every day that Gideon was alive with this new name, what it meant was that Baal was nowhere to be found, that Baal couldn't contend for himself, he couldn't defend himself. And day by day, as Gideon is called this new name, more and more people lost faith in Baal, and they recognized Jehovah, He's the real deal, He's the only God of Israel. Know, because Baal can't even defend himself, isn't that awesome? That's what one step of obedience, even in the midst of fear, was capable of doing, convincing people that there is one true God. This is the story of courage. You feel afraid, but you take the next step, you do it anyway, you obey God, you trust Him. And here's Gideon, we found him in the wine press. God calls him, still afraid, but does it at night. The townspeople give him a new name, but his story of courage isn't over. Now he finds himself in the battlefield. The Midianites have gathered to defeat the Israelites. There is an estimated 135,000 soldiers with Midian and their allies. They've come to erase Israel off the map. Guess how many men are with Gideon? A whole 32,000 men. My kids will say that math ain't math thing, there is it, 135,000 to 32,000 but God says something even more astonishing. Here's what God says in Judges seven, verse two, the Lord said to Gideon, "You have too many troops for me to hand the Midianites. Wait, what, God? Okay, maybe God, math isn't your thing, maybe science is your thing, so let's just stick with the math, we know too many, you mean two last. No, no. God says you've got too many troops for me to handle, for me to hand the Midianites over to them, or else Israel might elevate themselves over me and say I saved myself, or else Israel might find courage in themselves, or else Israel might find courage in the resource they have. So, God says, "You got too many men. And then God would lead Gideon through a series of exercises that would bring about a mass reduction of armed forces. Here's a reduction: Gideon would go from having 32,000 men to 10,000 to 300 to 300 men. So now on the battle scene in Judges seven you have 300 men against 135,000 I bet he needed some courage that

day. That's one Israelite to 450 Midianites, the odds are not looking great, one to 450 Really, God, yeah, that's what God did. And here's why God did it. God reduces our resources, so that we can discover our source. God reduces our resources, because sometimes that's the only way for you to discover that He is your source.

Libin Abraham 27:50

God strips the things we've been relying on and counting on, whether it be the reputation or the money or the job or the influence, whatever it may be, whatever some of those resources might be that we can look at that and say, man, that thing saved me. God will say, let me just take that away from you. Let me reduce your resources, so that you can see that I am the source. It was never that thing or that person that saved you, it was me all along. I know it's hard when you go through that season of resource reduction, but it might be the only way we recognize it's always been him. He is the source of our life. Amen. He is it. Not only does God reduce the resources, but he gives Gideon a wild and crazy plan, a battle plan that does not require or involve swords, shields, or chariots, but instead torches and trumpets and clay jars. It's the wildest battle plan. No one would agree on that, but that's what they did, and at God's signal, these 300 men, they would hold up their torches inside of clay jars, and they would blow the trumpet, and at the sound of the trumpet, they would drop the clay jars, and the clay jars would shatter like that glass vase at my friend's house, and as soon as it shattered, they will lift up the torch, and when the Midianites heard the sound of the trumpet and the sight of light, the Bible says God threw them into confusion, and they turned on each other, and they destroyed each other, and guess who won, Israel won, but guess who got the credit, God Almighty got the credit, Amen. He got the glory, God was not interested in giving Gideon a victory that was just difficult enough for them to still get the glory, God wanted to make an undone. Undereirable, that if had God not been on our side, where would we be? God wanted to make it explicitly clear that He was a source of strength and victory for people, not Baal, not our resources, or even our good intentions. It had always been the power of Almighty God, and God will take you through seasons. It is hard. It doesn't make sense. It feels like resources are lessened, but it's the only way that He can get the glory. We always want to celebrate a miracle after it happens, but sometimes you got to live through a season where it takes a miracle of God to come through. Otherwise, there is no hope. But this is where courage is found, and where courage is built, learning to trust God step by step. The greatest act of courage for me is not even Judges seven, it's actually what happened to the beginning of Judges eight. So, the victory is won, and the army is defeated, but a few of the kings got away, and most people would say, well, at least we defeated the army. We'll let the kings go away, but at least we got all the most of it done. The mission is partially accomplished, but not Gideon. Notice what Gideon does in Judges eight, verse four, Gideon and the 300 men came to the Jordan and crossed it. They were exhausted, but still in pursuit. And I love that phrase, because I think that's where some of you are. You may be exhausted, but still in pursuit. Gideon could have quit, his men could have quit, because technically the victory is won, but they didn't. They said to each other, we're not going to be done until God says we're done. We won't be finished until the mission is finally and fully over. So they were exhausted, and now they kept pursuing. Here's a man who just two chapters ago was hiding in a wine press, but now he's chasing down kings because he found courage in God. He saw what God was able to do. His trust was growing, his boldness was increasing, and he realized if God could do that in chapter seven, what more can He do now in my life? So, eventually Gideon would capture these kings, and Israel would have peace for the first time in seven years, they could plant crops without the fear of it getting stolen. They could raise cattle and enjoy the fruit of their labor. They experienced peace.

Libin Abraham 32:32

Why? Because a man named Gideon, who was hiding in a wine press, found courage in God. But you know, Gideon didn't find courage overnight. He found courage with one act of trust at a time. He found courage with one act of obedience at a time. He didn't go straight from the wine press to the battlefield against Midianites. He had to handle home first, even doing it at night, and sometimes when God calls you, and He invites you into His mission, you just need to think about what is my next best yes, because that's where courage is found. What's the next yes I can give? What's the next step? I can't take a leap yet, but what can I take a step in? Trust boldness. courage is built one yes at a time, one trusting moment at a time, one act of obedience at a time. I love to tell you that the story of Gideon was over, and we could go home, but there's actually one part of the story that often we miss, and this is not a pretty part of Gideon's story, but there is this warning at the end of Gideon's life that we come across, and I actually think it's amazing that the scripture writers left it in, because this moment reveals the flaws and temptations of Gideon, even after he got renamed, because your sin struggle may not go away right after you get renamed, temptations are still there, flaws are still there, and the fact that this part of Gideon's story is left in it for us is actually making space for people to enter into an imperfect story, so what happens is that after the battle, Israelites want to make Gideon king, understandably, and Gideon says, "No, no, I'm not going to rule over you, that's the Lord's job. And that was the right response, the Lord will rule over you, but then Gideon says, "Hey, give me all of the earrings that we

had as plunder from the Midianites, from the victory God gave us. Give me all the earrings, all the gold and silver, and they brought to him all the gold earrings. It was about 43 pounds of gold. And here is what Gideon did, and here is the tragedy that happened. Gideon made an ephod. From all this, and put it in Ephraim, his hometown. The ephod of the Old Testament was a priestly garment, only to be worn by Levitical priests in the tabernacle. But Gideon's got an idea. I'm not going to be king over you, but here's what I'll give you. Let me compromise. Let's build a memorial, an ephod out of gold, so they set it in his hometown, and notice what happens. Then all Israel prostituted themselves by worshiping it there, and it became a snare to Gideon and to his household. It's probably not how you imagine Gideon's story ending, is it? I think Gideon had good intentions. I think he wanted to make a golden memorial to celebrate what God did in that moment, but eventually the man who tore down idols ended up making a new idol, and Israel began to worship the ephod, prostituting themselves in front of it. What began as something meant to remember God became a replacement for God. It was to help them remember God, but now it replaced God, and instead of recognizing God as their source and worshiping God, who gave them victory, they worshiped this idol made of the gold God gave them, they made a new idol, but this time the idol didn't look like Baal. The idol looked like their success. The idol looked like their victory. Here's what it's saying. Here's what it's teaching us. Yesterday's victory can become tomorrow's temptations. Yesterday's success, yesterday's victory can actually become a snare when we begin to worship the success more than the success giver, and I see people all the time worshiping creation while forgetting creator, we'll worship the money God gave us, instead of the God who gave us the power to make money. We'll worship the gifts and forget the giver. And I'm telling you, in ministry, you can end up worshiping ministry and forgetting the God who called you into ministry. Ephraim was supposed to be a good thing, preaching is a good thing, serving is a good thing, ministry is a good thing, but don't make a good thing an idol.

Libin Abraham 37:45

And here, what was meant to make them remember God ended up replacing God, and it said it became a snare. Wasn't obvious, snares are not obvious, it looked like a good thing, but ended up being a snare for Gideon and his household. It's an invitation, but it's also an expression of grace, because Gideon needed grace, even as Jeroboam. Ultimately, the story of Gideon is a story of courage found in weakness. It's a story of God meeting us in our flaws and in our hiding. It's the story of God extending grace upon grace when we don't deserve it. It's a crazy battle plan that involves torches, light, trumpet, and clay jars. And then 1200 years later, the Apostle Paul will pick up the same imagery of Gideon's battle in Judges seven, and he'll refer to it, but not to tell us how God used Gideon, but to tell us how God uses us. So I want to end with Second Corinthians four verse six onwards, where Paul says, For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness, has shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of God's glory in the face of Jesus Christ. Now we have this treasure, which is Jesus, the gospel, knowing God through Jesus. We have this treasure where in clay jars. Why? So that this extraordinary power may be from God and not from us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed. We are perplexed, but not in despair. We are persecuted, but not abandoned. We are struck down, but not destroyed. So, today there is a torch you carry. It's the light of the gospel, and who carries it? Clays of jars, and who are clays of jars? Me and you. Clays of jars are not made of metal or steel or gold, to where it's unbreakable. No, no, clay jars are very fragile. They may have cracks in it. They will feel weak. It, and sometimes you may feel more like Gideon in a wine press than you do defeating the Midianites, but that's okay, because God on purpose chose clay jars, because it's never been about the jar of clay anyway, it's always been about the treasure. So today, if you feel weak, if you're hiding, you've got treasure inside of you. You have the Holy Spirit of God inside of you. You have the light of the gospel of Jesus inside of you. In fact, you have the very life of Christ inside of you. That's why you can be struck down but not destroyed. That's why you can be pushed over and feel weak, but not taken out, because you possess treasure inside of you, and the reason God chose the weak to make himself known through is because the world will know that this all surpassing power didn't come from within us, it's not in our merit, not in our power, not in accolades, but only came from Him. What an opportunity today? If you're in the wine press, Dad, young adult, Mom, single adult, God meets you, you've got treasure, let it be revealed through your day-to-day life, even through your fears and doubt. And may God build just enough trust to help you take the next yes for His glory. Would you bow your heads with me? I want to invite some of you to stand today, because I think there are some in the room who need a dose of courage. If today you need courage, just make this your admission before God. This may be your next yes to stand before Him. If you feel called into something new, if you feel called into a mission, if you feel called by God into something, but you feel like hiding, you don't feel the adequacy, you don't feel the ability, but you need courage to stand where you are. This is your testimony before God. I need courage, God. For some of you, the best decision today is to give your heavenly Father a Father's Day gift, which is to come home to Him. And the courage He's building in you is to say yes to Jesus, to trust in Him, to believe in Him, to give your heart to Him. If that's you, just stand where you are. For some of you, it's a day of returning, coming back not to self-sufficiency or self-confidence, but to God confidence.

Libin Abraham 42:29

And you can see your fears, you can see your doubts. But I'm asking you, would you allow God to build just enough trust to outpace your fear? Because that is where courage is found. Father, in this room and online, over brothers and sisters who need courage, may this be the day that we meet you in the wine press. We thank you that in our hiding, you are not hiding, but you are revealing. In our hiding, you revealing strength, you are revealing yourself, you are revealing how you see us. So, friend, you are a valiant warrior. You are a daughter of strength. You are a child of God. You are a woman of valor. You are a man of valor. You can lead, you can serve, you can give yourself fully to the mission of God, because God is sending you, and God is with you. He's enabling you, He's equipping you, He's encouraging you. Take your next yes, say your next yes for all that He has. And, Father, if there are idols in our heart, idols in our home, may we begin there, deconstructing some altars we've set up, altars of self or convenience of busyness or distraction, whatever it might be. Help us, God, to reconstruct an altar for you, where you're enthroned as Lord of all, as Savior and King of all that we are, Lord. We love you. We thank you. Send us out with courage. We pray in Jesus' name. And everyone said together, Amen, Amen, Amen. Can we give God a praise of thanksgiving for who He is? Amen.