

May 12, 2024

Unlikely: “Not likely; improbable; likely to fail; unpromising.”¹

Unlikely people:

- Nils Bohlin.
- Philo Farnsworth.
- Henry Dunant.
- Maurice Hillman.
- Witold Pilecki.
- Lewis Latimer.
- James Harrison.
- Gravilo Princip.
- Henrietta Lacks.
- Dave Wottle.
- Spud Webb.

Unlikely people in the Bible:

- David.
- Paul.
- Mary.
- Moses.
- Esther.
- Rahab.

Judges 6:1-32

- The Midianites (**Judges 6:1-6**).
- Gideon: “cutter down, feller, hewer.” AKA Jerubbaal (**Judges 6:11-12**).
 - Son of Joash.
 - Threshing wheat...in a winepress.
 - “Mighty hero.”

Gideon’s Response:

- **“If the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us?”** (**Judges 6:13**).
 - “The LORD has abandoned us...” (**6:13**).
 - A direct contrast to the prophet’s message (**6:7-10**).
 - God’s response: “Go in the strength you have and save Israel...” (**6:14**)
- **“My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family”** (**6:15**).
 - Weakest; least (**1 Sam 9:21; Ex. 3-4**).
 - “I will be with you...” (**6:16**).
- **I still need a sign!!**
 - Present/*minha* – Goats and unleavened cakes.
 - The present is consumed by fire, then the angel disappears.
 - “Alas, Sovereign LORD, I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face!” (**6:22**).
- **The first task.**
 - Gideon was told to tear down his father’s altar.
 - Took 10 servants and did it at night (**6:25-27**).

¹ “Unlikely.” *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/unlikely>. Accessed 7 May. 2024. Scripture quotations marked NIV are taken from the New International Version®, Copyright 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011. Biblica Inc. Zondervan. Grand Rapids, MI 49546. All rights reserved.

- Baal.
- Asherah.
- People were not happy.
 - Men of the town wanted to kill Gideon (**6:30**).
 - Joash defends Gideon and insults Baal (**6:31-32**).
 - Where is Gideon?!?
- **Why would God choose Gideon?**
 - He didn't believe God.
 - He challenged God.
 - He made excuses.
 - He was NOT a mighty leader.
 - Previous judges were strong leaders.
 - Gideon is hiding, struggles to believe, then obeys God at night.
 - Gideon still isn't done testing God.
 - God loves using unlikely people.
 - Israel isn't very faithful to God right now, so why not make a situation where ONLY God could save?!?
 - God uses people in spite of their weaknesses.
 - **"But the LORD said to Samuel, 'Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart'" (1 Sam. 16:7).**
- So what about us?
 - What are our weaknesses, our faults, our shortcomings?
 - All of us are unlikely people to be used by God (**Heb. 11**).
 - Even though we aren't perfect, God can still use us!
 - It is ok to do something "out of our depth," but we DO have to do!!

Questions to meditate on and discuss:

1. When doing something new, do you prefer to take risks, or to have all the information/knowledge first?
2. What are some of your weaknesses, some of your shortcomings? How do you feel about these?
3. Have you ever seen God use "unlikely" people in your life? If so, how?
4. Read **Hebrews 11**. What weaknesses do some of the people in this chapter have? How did God use them in spite of their weaknesses?
5. Why do you think God would call Gideon to do something he had no experience doing? Why wouldn't God have picked a leader?
6. Read **1 Corinthians 1:26-31**. What do you think the phrase "God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise..." means? Have you seen this play out in your life?
7. Is there something that God is asking you to do in your life that you don't feel qualified to do? Is there anything else holding you back?
8. Do you need to be "qualified" to follow God? Why or why not?
9. Is there anywhere in the Bible where people tried to persuade God they were unqualified? (**Spoiler alert**: there is!). How well did it work for these people?
10. What is one step you can take to begin doing what God is asking you to do, qualified or not?

Other Passages to read: 1 Samuel 16; Exodus 3-4; Jonah; Esther.