

LET GO OF THE LIES THAT MAKE YOU WEAK

Two tiny words.
Five little letters.
But put them together and their power is unlimited.

Together they have imprisoned more people
than all of history's tyrants.
They have created more despair than all of nature's disasters.
And they have defeated more lives than all the world's armies.

What are they?
The two little words: I can't.

Two little words that cause people to look at
the dreams they once had,
the changes they need to make,
the lives they want to live, and
the purpose they were created to fulfill,
and to think: But I could never do that.

I want to encourage you,
no, I want to challenge you,
to let go of the lies that make you weak.

I can't overcome.
That's a lie.

I'm not enough.
That's a lie.

I don't have what it takes.
That's a lie.

I can't change.
That's a lie.

I'll never succeed because
I'm not as strong or as smart or as gifted as others.
That's a lie.

Listen to me.
The Gospel of Jesus Christ is not you aren't, and you can't.
The Gospel of Jesus Christ is: by the grace of God,
"You are and you can!"

Empowered by the Spirit of God,
you are enough to do whatever God has called you to do.
Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world
and that means:
You can face every challenge,
you can overcome every obstacle, and
you can defeat every enemy
that would keep you from living the abundant life
that is yours in Jesus Christ.

But before you can live that life,
you must let go of the lies that make you weak
and take hold of who God says you are.

Dr. Aaron Beck is a professor of psychiatry at the University of
Pennsylvania wrote:

Dr. Aaron Beck: The data I developed led inescapably to the conclusion that
how we think determines to a large extent whether we will succeed
and enjoy life — or even survive.

Whether our problems make us better or bitter,
whether we overcome our challenges,
whether tough times make us more or less like Jesus,
We may fight those battles with heart,
but the victory begins in our minds.

If the enemy can get you to believe his lies –
 If he can get you to repeat to yourself:

I'm all alone.

I'm too weak.

I don't have what it takes.

There's nothing I can do.

If the enemy can fill your mind with those lies
 and you allow them to remain,
 you will be defeated before the battle begins.

But if you want to overcome,
 you better think like an overcomer.

If you want to be victorious,
 you better think like a champion.

If you want to be more like Jesus,
 you better stop
 thinking like a victim,
 believing you are pitiful and powerless,
 and you'd better start thinking like Jesus who said,

John 16.33: In this world you will have trouble; but take heart, for I have overcome the world.

Let go of the lies that make you weak.
 Take hold of the truth of who God says you are.
 And you will find that you can do all things
 through Christ who strengthens you.

In the book of Judges we find a little man living a little life
 in a world full of big problems.

WHEN WE MEET GIDEON THINGS IS TOUGH ALL OVER.
 FOR THE PAST SEVEN YEARS THE MIDIANITES HAVE
 OPPRESSED THE ISRAELITES.

THE MIDIANITES SHOW UP AT HARVEST TIME,
 TAKE ALL THE CROPS THEY WANT,
 DESTROY THE REST, AND
 KILL ANYONE WHO TRIES TO STOP THEM.

Things have gotten so bad that the Israelites no longer live in their homes.
 Instead, they hide out in mountain caves where they won't be found.

A powerful enemy falls upon them,
 plunders their resources,
 and to save themselves,
 they have quarantined themselves,
 sheltered in place, and
 have hoped the enemy won't find them and destroy them.

Some of us are feeling plundered, aren't we?
 Our plans for the future,
 our finances have been plundered,
 our jobs, some of us,
 our health,
 the health of a spouse,
 who we thought we were going to be,
 what we thought we were going to do,
 our self-respect,
 our ability to live with peace and contentment —

an enemy has plundered us
 and taken what was ours.
 And we're isolating and hiding and wondering when it will end.

We pick up the story in Judges 6.14 when an angel of the Lord shows up
 and says to Gideon:

Judges 6.14: Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand.

AND GIDEON RESPONDS,

v.15: How can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family.

Paraphrased Gideon tells God: I can't because I'm not.

I CAN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT THESE PROBLEMS

because

I'M NOT A WARRIOR.

I'M NOT A CHAMPION.

I'M NOT A MAN OF COURAGE.

GOD,

YOU DON'T KNOW WHO YOU'RE TALKING TO.

GET THIS: GOD ALWAYS KNOWS WHO HE'S TALKING TO.
GOD KNEW GIDEON BETTER THAN GIDEON KNEW GIDEON.
AND GOD KNOWS YOU BETTER THAN YOU KNOW YOU.

AND GOD KNOWS THIS:

IN HIS HANDS,

WALKING IN THE HOLY SPIRIT,

YOU CAN

FACE YOUR FEARS,

OVERCOME YOUR CHALLENGES, AND

LIVE A VICTORIOUS LIFE.

WHAT ARE THE TRUTHS THAT PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE

“I'M NOT” AND “I CAN'T” AND “I COULD NEVER”
NEED TO TAKE HOLD OF?

THE FIRST IS THIS:

GOD IS WITH ME

Judges 6.12: The angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon and said, “The Lord is with you, Mighty Warrior.”

AND GIDEON’S RESPONSE IS SO REAL.
IT’S JUST LIKE SOMETHING YOU AND I WOULD SAY:

Judges 6.13: If the Lord is with us, why has all this happened to us?

LORD, IF YOU ARE WITH US,
WHY IS EVERYTHING SO BAD?
LORD, IF YOU ARE WITH US,
WHY ARE SO MANY PEOPLE HURTING?
WHY HAS EVERYTHING WE WORKED FOR
BEEN TAKEN FROM US?

IF YOU ARE WITH ME,
WHY IS MY CHILD ADDICTED TO DRUGS,
WHY IS MY WIFE ILL,
WHY ARE MY FINANCES SUCH A MESS,
WHY IS MY MARRIAGE FALLING APART,
WHY AM I FILLED WITH ANXIETY AND FEAR?
IF YOU ARE WITH US,
WHY CAN’T I SEE AN END TO THIS SUFFERING?

HERE’S THE INTERESTING PART.

GOD DOES NOT GIVE GIDEON AN ANSWER,
BUT HE DOES GIVE GIDEON A PROMISE.

Judges 6.16: The Lord said to him, “I will be with you, and you will defeat the Midianites.”

SOMETIMES WE CAN'T MAKE ANY SENSE OF
WHAT'S GOING ON IN OUR LIVES OR
WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE WORLD.

THE PROBLEMS ARE SO BIG,
THE PAIN IS SO GREAT,
THE DISAPPOINTMENTS ARE SO MANY,
THAT THEY'VE TAKEN THE HEART OUT OF US.

AND WE WANT A REASON WHY.
WE ASK GOD FOR A REASON WHY.

I'M GOING TO TELL YOU TWO TRUTHS.

1. WE VERY SELDOM GET THAT REASON.
AND
2. THAT'S OK.

IF YOU DON'T KNOW THAT NOW,
ONE DAY YOU WILL.

IT'S OK NOT TO GET A REASON WHY
BECAUSE REASONS WHY DON'T BRING HOPE.
REASONS WHY DON'T BRING STRENGTH.
REASONS WHY DON'T BRING LIFE.

BUT THE PROMISES OF GOD DO.

THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE ANXIOUS AND FRIGHTENED,
THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE LOST INCOME, JOBS
OR HEALTH,
THOSE OF YOU WHO FEEL ALONE,
I WANT YOU TO KNOW THIS: THE LORD IS WITH YOU.

HOWEVER YOU'VE BEEN HURT:
 THE LORD IS WITH YOU.
 NO MATTER WHAT'S BEEN TAKEN FROM YOU,
 THE LORD IS WITH YOU.
 NO MATTER HOW CONFUSING YOUR LIFE IS RIGHT NOW,
 THE LORD IS WITH YOU.
 NO MATTER HOW SMALL AND INADEQUATE,
 NO MATTER HOW ALONE AND DESPERATE
 YOU MAY FEEL,
 THE LORD IS WITH YOU
 AND HE WILL BE WITH YOU.

TO GET GIDEON THROUGH THE MOST DIFFICULT TIME OF HIS
 LIFE.
 GOD DOES NOT GIVE GIDEON
 A REASON WHY OR
 AN EXPLANATION FOR OR
 A TIME TABLE WHEN OR
 A PLAN HOW.

HE GIVES GIDEON SOMETHING SO MUCH GREATER
 THAN ANY OF THOSE THINGS.
 HE GIVES GIDEON A PROMISE:
 I AM WITH YOU,
 I WILL BE WITH YOU,
 I WILL BE WORKING ON YOUR BEHALF, AND
 YOU WILL OVERCOME.

Story about Loreine Johnston

YOU MAY OR MAY NOT HAVE A SIMILAR EXPERIENCE
 BUT YOU HAVE THE SAME GOD
 AND YOU HAVE THE SAME PROMISE.

THE LORD IS WITH YOU.

Deuteronomy 31.8: The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.”

Isaiah 41.10: Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Matthew 28.20: And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

THE LORD IS WITH ME.

Let's say that together: The Lord is with me.

Once more: THE LORD IS WITH ME.

FEEL THE ANXIETY AND THE FEAR LEAVE.

THE LORD IS WITH ME.

HE WILL BE WITH ME.

AND I WILL OVERCOME.

THE ENEMY WANTS YOU TO BELIEVE YOU ARE ALONE.

THE ENEMY WANTS YOU TO BELIEVE THAT IF

YOU DON'T HAVE

A REASON WHY OR

A TIME TABLE WHEN OR

A PLAN FOR HOW,

THINGS WILL NEVER GET BETTER

AND YOU WILL LIVE DEFEATED.

BUT THAT'S A LIE.

IT'S A LIE THAT WILL MAKE YOU WEAK AND AFRAID.

LET GO OF IT AND BELIEVE THE TRUTH: GOD IS WITH YOU.

HERE'S A SECOND TRUTH TO TAKE HOLD OF:

I AM STRONGER THAN I KNOW

Judges 6.14: Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand.

WE ALL HAVE A MENTAL SELF-IMAGE
THAT CONTROLS WHAT WE DO AND
THAT LIMITS WHAT WE'LL ATTEMPT.

AND GOD CALLS US TO
FACE GREAT FEARS,
OVERCOME TREMENDOUS OBSTACLES, AND
FIGHT TERRIFYING BATTLES.

BUT OUR MENTAL IMAGE SAYS:
I CAN'T DO THAT
BECAUSE I'M NO WARRIOR.

GOD CALLS US TO LIVE
AS IF LIFE IS A GREAT ADVENTURE,
EVEN IN CHALLENGING TIMES,
ESPECIALLY IN CHALLENGING TIMES.

BUT OUR MENTAL IMAGE SAYS:
I CAN'T DO THAT
BECAUSE I'M NOT WILD AT HEART.

IN THE MIDST OF OUR TRIAL AND OUR TRIBULATIONS,
GOD CALLS US TO FORGET OURSELVES
AND DO GREAT THINGS FOR OTHERS.
BUT OUR MENTAL IMAGE SAYS:
I CAN'T DO THAT
BECAUSE I'M SMALL AND WEAK
AND MY STRENGTH IS BARELY ENOUGH FOR ME.

I'M A NICE GUY.
I'M A GEOLOGIST OR A BANKERS OR A LAWYER.
I'M A HUSBAND AND A DAD.
AND YES, I BELIEVE IN JESUS.

BUT I'M NOT A WARRIOR,
I DON'T HAVE THE HEART FOR ADVENTURE,
I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH TO SACRIFICE FOR OTHERS.

THAT'S EXACTLY HOW GIDEON THOUGHT.

I'M WEAK.

I'M SMALL.

I DON'T HAVE WHAT IT TAKES.

Judges 6.15: But, Lord, how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh.

LORD, MY FAMILY IS THE WEAKEST IN OUR TRIBE.
 MY FATHER WASN'T A FIGHTER,
 HIS FATHER WASN'T A FIGHTER.
 NONE OF US HAVE EVER BEEN THE HERO
 OR EVEN WANTED TO BE.

Judges 6.15b: I am the least in my family.

Lord, even in a family like mine, I'm the least.

Every one of my brothers can beat me up.

Heck, every one of my sisters can beat me up.

Lord, even the cat's not afraid of me.

AND WHAT DOES GOD SAY TO GIDEON?

Judges 6.14: Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand.

YOU ARE STRONGER THAN YOU KNOW.

AND HERE'S WHAT GOD SAYS TO YOU:
 YOU ARE STRONGER THAN YOU KNOW.

How did this start?

Do you remember?

Judges 6.12: The angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon and said, "The Lord is with you, Mighty Warrior."

Gideon says, "I'm nothing, the least of the least."
God says, "You are a mighty warrior."

Look at me please.
"The Lord is with you, mighty warrior.
You are more powerful than you imagine.
You are more resilient than you think you are.
You are stronger than you know.
You are capable of doing great things.

Stop telling God who you're not.
And start believing who God says you are.

I want to jump away from Gideon for a moment
to the story of David.
He too was facing an imposing enemy.

You know the story.
For forty days a Philistine champion,
a giant by the name of Goliath,
has been calling out the men of Israel.
Goliath is nine feet tall,
his armor weighs 125 pounds,
his spear is as big as a weaver's beam
and its iron tip weighs 15 lbs.

And he calls out to the Israelite army,
"Send a man over to fight me.
He defeats me, we will serve you.
I defeat him, you serve us."

Forty days this has gone on
and nobody has stood up.
David, too young to be in the army,
brings his brother supplies from home,
and the first time he hears this, he says,
I'll fight him.

This heathen is defying the Lord our God,
 and I won't listen to this again.
 I'll go and I'll put a rock between his eyes.
 And then I'll cut off his head
 and feed his body to the animals of the field.

Ask any man in the Israelite army,
 "Can God conquer a giant,"
 and every one of them would have said,
 "Yes, of course."
 Ask them, "Can God conquer that giant — Goliath?"
 And they would have said, "Without a doubt."

So why didn't any of them step forward to fight Goliath?
 Not because they didn't believe in God,
 but because they didn't believe in themselves.

I'm a soldier,
 but I'm not a giant killer.
 That's some grade-A, special ops, Navy Seal, Robocop kind of stuff.
 And that's not me.

Look, believe you're not and you'll say I can't and you won't.

David hears Goliath once,
 and he says, I'll face him and I'll kill him.

And the soldiers say,
 Are you nuts — look at the guy.
 And King Saul says to him,
 You can't — you're just a youth.

They try to put their fears on David;
 they want him to feel as anxious and as frightened as they do.
 It will make them feel better
 if David believes the same lie about himself
 that they believe about themselves.

But David will have none of it.

He responds, I've been keeping my father's sheep, and

1 Samuel 17.34-36: When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep, I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep. Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear, and this Philistine will be like one of them.

David says,

You see me as a boy.

But, I know I'm a warrior.

And you're about to see what a mighty warrior does
in the time of crisis when others are depending on him.

David is full of confidence.

Why?

Because he has killed the lion
and he has killed the bear.

And so have you.

I'm sure you have failed before.

So have I.

We all have.

But you have done hard things.

You have fought battles that mattered.

You have been surprised by how much you could bear
and what you could do.

Don't forget that.

You have faced the lion and you have faced the bear.

And you have overcome.

And you can say what the apostle Paul said:

Philippians 4.13: I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Whatever you're facing now,
 don't believe the lie that you're weak and incapable.

Story of John Collier

Picture

Do not listen to the lies in your head
 that make you weak and
 that tell you that you are less than you are.

You are who God says you are —
 And God's word to you is:
 Hail, mighty warrior, the Lord is with you.
 Now go in the strength you have and deliver Israel.

One last truth to hold onto.

My God will Fight for Me

Let's fast forward in our story.
 Gideon has come a long way at this point.
 He has recruited an army
 and has had some victories.
 Now he's ready for the decisive battle.

Judges 7.2: The Lord said to Gideon, "The people with you are too many. If I let all of you fight the Midianites, the Israelites will boast to me that they saved themselves by their own strength."

GOD TELLS GIDEON I HAVE A PLAN FOR DEFEATING THE
 MIDIANITES.
 HERE'S THE FIRST PART OF THE PLAN.
 YOU HAVE AN ARMY OF 30,000,
 I'm going to need you to send some of them away.

Ok, God, how many?
 27,700.
 You can keep 300.
 GIDEON obeys.

Ok, ready for the rest of the plan?

Get EVERY GUY A TRUMPET
 AND A TORCH.
 Have them SURROUND THE MIDIANITE CAMP,
 you give the command,
 they'll all blow on their trumpets
 raise their torches really high and
 shout as loud as they can.

Something catchy like:
 FOR GIDEON AND FOR THE LORD.

NOW IF I'M GIDEON,
 MY RESPONSE IS, "GOD, THAT'S THE PLAN?"
 I HAVEN'T BEEN A GENERAL LONG,
 BUT I'M PRETTY SURE OF THIS:
 30,000 SOLDIERS WITH SWORDS IS MORE INTIMIDATING
 THAN 300 GUYS WITH TRUMPETS
 PLAYING THE BOOGIE-WOOGIE BUGLE BOY
 FROM COMPANY B.

BUT NOT GIDEON.
 HE DOES WHAT THE LORD SAYS,
 AND THAT NIGHT HE GIVES THE SIGNAL.
 300 MEN RAISE THEIR TORCHES,
 CRY OUT "FOR THE LORD AND FOR GIDEON,"
 AND THEY BLOW THEIR TRUMPETS.

AND IN THE DARKNESS,
 THE MIDIANITES BELIEVE THEY ARE BESIEGED BY A HUGE
 SURROUNDING ARMY,
 THEY TAKE THEIR SWORDS AND BEGIN FIGHTING AMONG
 THEMSELVES.

FULL OF FEAR,
 THEY FINALLY FLEE INTO THE NIGHT.
 AND THAT'S HOW GIDEON DEFEATED HIS OPPRESSORS.

GET THIS:
 THE STRENGTH THAT GIDEON HAD –
 IT DIDN'T HAVE TO BE STRONG ENOUGH TO DEFEAT THE
 MIDIANITES.

WHY?
 BECAUSE HE DIDN'T HAVE TO DEFEAT THE MIDIANITES.
 GOD DID IT
 AND GOD ALWAYS KNEW HE WOULD DO IT.

THEN WHAT STRENGTH DID GIDEON NEED?
 HE NEEDED ENOUGH STRENGTH TO TRUST GOD,
 HE NEEDED ENOUGH STRENGTH TO
 FACE HIS FEARS.
 HE NEEDED ENOUGH STRENGTH TO BE OBEDIENT.

THAT'S ALL.
 AND THAT'S ALL THE STRENGTH YOU NEED.

Story of Virginia

Virginia may have looked like a frail, little old lady,
 unsteady, shaking, and overwhelmed.
 But she lived life like a warrior.

And throughout her life,
 raising her kids,
 providing for them,
 overcoming her loss and her pain,
 serving Jesus and others,
 She killed the lion
 and she killed the bear.
 And she had learned that the power of God was alive in her life.

Instead of believing the lie that she was weak and powerless.
She believed the truth
 that she was stronger than she knew
 and that she could do all things through Christ
 who strengthened her.

GIDEON,
WHO BEGAN A SMALL MAN LIVING A LITTLE LIFE,
 IMPRISONED BY TWO TINY WORDS: I CAN'T,
BECAME A MIGHTY MAN OF GOD WHO
DEFEATED THE POWER OF EVIL,
DELIVERED THOSE WHO WERE OPPRESSED AND
CHANGED HIS WORLD –

WHEN INSTEAD OF LOOKING AT HIMSELF AND SAYING “I
 CAN'T,”
HE LOOKED AT HIS GOD AND SAID,
 “WITH HIS POWER, I CAN.”

LET ME CLOSE WITH THIS PIECE BY
 LANGSTON HUGHES THAT I HAVE ALWAYS LOVED.

IT'S TITLED: MOTHER TO SON