

Judges 6-8 “Gideon: Weakness of men, Strength from God”

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[0 : 0 0] You are listening to a message from Southwood Presbyterian Church in Huntsville, Alabama. Our passion is to experience and express grace. Join us.

! Good morning. For those of you who are visiting or watching online, I just want to remind you my name is Bill Herrett. I'm the associate pastor here. I work with youth and families, and I'm grateful to be able to share God's word with you today.

I'm excited for what God's doing in the life of our people, and I'm grateful that I get the chance to be a part of it. So that being said, let me pray for us as we get started this morning. Father, we're thankful for your word. We're thankful that it's timeless, that it teaches us, it transforms us, it sanctifies us.

Lord, would you use your word today to help us to draw closer to Jesus, draw closer to the God of the universe in all of our lives.

Help us to never forget our great weakness found in our sin, found in our brokenness, is redeemed and made whole again and healed through the power of the cross through Jesus himself, through his death and resurrection.

[1 : 1 1] Lord, we thank you that we can know this today. We love you. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. I want to make sure that this morning we remember that we are in a larger series about how God is at work redeeming and renewing things, and his grace is poured out throughout not just the New Testament, but we see God's grace in his work in the Old Testament as well.

And so we're looking through various stories as we see God's grace at work. And I want to take a moment to just say before we step into the book of Judges, is that there's an element that I want to make sure that we remember, and somehow we need to be more acquainted with normalizing our spiritual weakness.

We need to be more acquainted with that, and we need to make it more of a regular kind of understanding of who we are so that we can glorify God rightly. And I think a lot of times we can buy into our culture and the myths that make us feel good about ourselves in a lot of ways.

So, because I think our culture really loves underdog stories, right? We really love a good underdog story, right? For those of us who are older, and as my kids say, you were born in the 1900s.

I was born before the same year of the story of, let's say, the USA hockey team in 1980, where they were these massive underdogs.

[2 : 4 5] And I didn't really know about it because I was 23 when the movie Miracle came out. I didn't really know about it. The internet had not brought me to that place where I could know about the Olympic hockey team that defeats Russia and goes on to win gold, right?

And so this epic story of these ragtag American hockey players coming on to win, right? America loves, we love an underdog story, right?

Maybe this one, this one I thought was funny when I was just kind of doing some research about underdog stories. Did you know Colonel Sanders, right? Let's start there. Kentucky Fried Chicken.

Did you know he was rejected? I wrote it down to make sure I remembered. He was rejected 1,009 times before he got his restaurant started. He's an underdog.

Now, if you think about the millions of dollars, the millions of chickens that have been served, he's doing all right. His company did okay, rejected over 1,000 times and is now one of the most iconic restaurants in the world.

[3 : 54] But I want to make sure we remember that those things can often remind us that we can do all things through ourselves. We can do it all. I can make it happen. It's about me. And I want to make sure we remember that the scriptures point us to the God of the universe who is strong.

And we can look at today's story as an underdog story, but we need to remember that the point of the scriptures is to remember to point ourselves back to God and see his strength.

See, the Bible's not a book about me. It's a book about God himself and how he's at work. And so as we dive into Judges, let's remind ourselves kind of where we are and what God's doing.

We were talking about this time after the death of Joshua, God's people delivered to the promised land. Joshua has passed away. And yet, but also before the kings of Israel are established.

And so we need to remember that there's this time where these 12 leaders, these judges, were called to lead God's people. And in chapter 17 and chapter 21, there's this verse that gets repeated.

[5 : 05] It says, in those days, Israel had no king and everyone did as they saw fit. And in a sense, this is reminding us that God's people were turning from himself, turning from God and turning to idolatry.

And so we get to do this. So what we're going to do today is we're going to zoom in. If you have like a camera, you're, you know, you know, you got the wide shot. And then we're going to zoom in on the story of Gideon today. And Gideon is one of those 12 judges whom God calls to lead Israel.

And so I want to make sure we say this just bluntly as possible. What is God doing in the story of Gideon? He's bringing to the forefront Gideon's weakness.

And he's highlighting his own strength as he works through Gideon to restore Israel, to right worship, to right relationship.

And so what is God doing in this story is he's calling Gideon to a work. And so in chapter 6, so this is the hard part of this story, is I'm going to try and do some summarizing.

[6 : 09] And I'm also going to try and read from Scripture. So if you would try and follow along, I'll try and give you good summaries. But what I want to make sure we hear first is that in this story, we see that God calls the weak.

Okay. So in Judges chapter 6, verses 1 and 2, the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. And the Lord gave them into the hand of Midian, an enemy of God, an enemy nation for seven years.

And the hand of Midian overpowered Israel. And because of Midian, the people of Israel made for themselves the dens that are in the mountains and the caves and the strongholds. Okay. So we've got in this time of Israel's disobedience to God, they turned away and they have given themselves over to idol worship.

There's this judgment against Israel for what they've done. There's this judgment against Israel for their disobedience and idolatry.

And then we move to chapter 6, verses 7 through 10. What we have is God's people crying out to God. And here in 7 through 10, it says, When the people of Israel cried out to the Lord on account of Midianites.

[7 : 23] And the Lord sent a prophet to the people of Israel. He said to them, Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, I led you up from Egypt and brought you out of the house of slavery. And I delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of all who oppressed you.

And drove them out before you and gave them their land. And I said to you, I am the Lord your God. You shall not fear the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But you have not obeyed my voice.

So what happens is we have Yahweh, the God of the universe, sending a prophet to Israel. He sends this prophet to speak the truth of their disobedience for their lack of faith and trust in the God of the universe.

And then, and he sends the angel of the Lord to Gideon. Okay, so this, we're going to look at verses 11 through 16. So we're going to start with 11 through 13, then we'll read all the way to 16.

Now the angel of the Lord came and sat under the terebinth of, which, pause real quick. I never become a worse reader of the Bible than when I have to read names. I've never felt, feel more insecure about reading the Bible than when I have to read it up front.

[8 : 33] And have to say all these Old Testament names and places. So if I stumble a little bit, please forgive me. Now the angel of the Lord came and sat under the terebinth at Uphrah, which belonged to Joash, the Abiezrite.

While his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the winepress to hide it from the Midianites. And the angel of the Lord appeared to him and said to him, the Lord is with you, a mighty man of valor. And Gideon said to him, please, my Lord, if the Lord is with us, and then, why then has all this happened to us?

And where are all of his wonderful deeds that our fathers recounted to us? Saying, did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt? But now the Lord has forsaken us and given us to the hand of Midian.

And the Lord turned to him and said, go in this might of yours and save Israel from the hand of Midian. Do not I send you? And he said to him, please, Lord, how can I save Israel?

Behold, my clan is the weakest in Manasseh. And I am the least in my father's house. And the Lord said to him, but I will be with you. And you shall strike the Midianites as one man.

[9 : 35] And so we see in this early part of the story of Gideon, we see God has been placing Israel under judgment.

The people cry out. A prophet calls them back to obedience, to faith in Yahweh. And then he sends an angel of the Lord to Gideon. And what we see in this passage, we see Gideon being called by God to himself.

Called by God to do the work of setting Israel free from the plague, from the Midianites. And in this, we see this rebuttal from Gideon.

No, no, no, no, no. I'm the least of my family. And I'm the least, we're from the least of our tribes. I could never do this. And I want to make sure we take this for what it is.

Because to be the smallest of your clan and to be the smallest in your family means that you're admitting you're the weakest of the weak. And what God is doing is to come and call Gideon to do this work and serve the God of the universe and to bring Israel out from under this judgment from the Midianites.

[10 : 52] He's doing a crazy countercultural reality check to Israel. He's giving them this point of saying, hey, I could pick the biggest, the strongest, but I'm going to work through the smallest, the littlest, the least.

See, we know that the most powerful, the biggest, the strongest, they're the ones that could do the most damage. They're the ones who can handle it. The one with the most power. And God says, no, no, no.

I'm calling you. God is calling the weakest, the youngest, the least of his family. Not the firstborn, but the littlest, the youngest.

And I want to make sure you see that God is here calling Gideon. But we listen to his credentials and we're like, yeah, no, maybe somebody else would be better.

How often do we look at our credentials and our abilities and our gifts and we misplace our trust? We misplace our trust in what the world tells us is good, what is right.

[12 : 09] We misplace our trust and say, no, I'm not big enough, strong enough. I couldn't do it. I'm the youngest. I'm the worst. First, God is calling out from his people a leader who will not be supported by his credentials.

He's calling out a leader who will be supported by his God. He's calling out a leader who will be held up by Yahweh, by the creator of the world, by the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, by the very God who brought them out of the land, brought them into the land of promise, by the very God who remembered his covenant with them, by the very God who brought them out of the house of slavery.

And so God is calling Gideon against Midian by his power, not by Gideon's power.

And let's think about the realities of the whole Bible, right? And if we remember oral traditions in the Old Testament and thinking about how we would hear stories and write, like you could even hear it in Gideon, the way he's like, well, you recounted to us how we were brought out of Egypt.

What's happening, God? Think about it and think about God's response and how it echoes Exodus and how God speaks to Moses.

[13 : 31] Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt. But Moses said to God, who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?

And he said, but I will be with you. I will be with you. This is the same language that God uses to speak to Gideon.

I will be with you. And this is an incredible reminder to us that in our weakness, God will equip us. I can't help, there was a sign in one of the churches I've worked at after seminary right outside in our hallway.

And it says that God equips the called. God doesn't necessarily call the equipped. He equips the called.

And so this is a reminder that Gideon goes forward in his calling, not on his own strength, but the strength of God who calls him.

[14 : 34] Not on his own strength, but on the strength of the God who calls him. So what does that mean for us? Here we are, New Testament believers looking backwards through all of biblical history, understanding where we stand with the cross between us and Gideon's story.

We know that we are weak ourselves. We know our state. We know we are sinners. See, this thing is something that I've personally had to wrestle with over and over and over again in my life.

Because I really like this verse out of 1 Timothy. And I try and remind myself regularly, I try and remember to teach it when we talk about sin and the reality of Christ's death and resurrection.

And what faith looks like and what we believe. And in 1 Timothy it says, Here's a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am the worst.

This is the Apostle Paul. Telling his disciple Timothy, of whom I am the worst. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. For that reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Jesus Christ might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life.

[15 : 58] Jesus came for sinners. He tells us he came for the sick. Not the well. He tells us he came for the unrighteous.

Not the righteous. And so we see this picture of God's grace. By just simply calling out the weak. To do the work for God's people.

We see this picture of grace. That little old Gideon would be called by God. And it provides us with a picture of hope. That God had not given up on Israel.

That his covenant would be maintained. That he would keep his promises. It gives us a picture of God's heart. And that he is faithful. And that he loves his people. And he is a promise keeping God.

And above all, this is the God we need. We felt. We know that Jesus has come to save sinners.

[16 : 55] We have to admit before God himself that we are sinners. That we are unrighteous. There's this weakness that we have in ourselves. In our very state as human beings. Fallen people.

We have to admit our weakness. In order to know the salvation. And the greatness. And the beauty of God's saving work in Jesus.

And so some of you, maybe you're sitting in the pews today. And you feel little. You feel weak. You feel defeated. Maybe you feel overwhelmed or beat down. And you've lost yourselves.

Maybe you are feeling this sense of need even now. And what we see in this story is that God shows up. And he calls Gideon to himself.

For the sake of all of his people to be called to him. God continues to show up. He's calling you to himself as well.

[17 : 56] Because in Christ we find great healing. We find the real righteousness we need. We find the real truth we need. We find God at work calling sinners to life.

Sinners to righteousness through the work of Jesus. So we must admit we are sinners. We must admit we are weak. In order to understand God's good grace.

More than just calling us though. We see what Gideon does is that God in this story. He doesn't just call him and say, well that's nice. We got you over here. You understand who I am.

But he actually uses Gideon. He actually uses him for his kingdom work. See, you have Gideon being commanded by God to destroy the altar of Baal.

And he uses God in this story to destroy these false idols that have been set up in the promised land. And God's heart is as we see him restoring Gideon and drawing Gideon to himself.

[19 : 04] His heart is to use Gideon so that he might restore Israel to his people. To write worship and to turn back to the God. Not just defeat Midian and his armies. But to turn Israel back to him.

And so in Judges chapter 6 verses 25 to 27. We see this.

So what we see is that God is using Gideon. He's not just calling himself. You see God is using him to destroy this altar.

And so you think that Gideon isn't just someone who sits idly by. But that God uses him and puts him. And even more so, right, we've got this story that goes on, right.

And a lot of us know this part of the story. This is the most well-known part. It's where Gideon calls an army to himself, right. Gideon has this. He basically is knocked down the altar of Baal at night.

[20 : 28] And they come to him. And he is dealt with. And they go to Gideon's dad, Joash. And they say to him, you know, you've got to give us Gideon.

And they say, well, why don't we let Baal contend with him? And the Midianites, the story turns. And the Midianites and the Amalekites come together. And they come down.

And we're going to gloss over, unfortunately, the story of the fleece a little bit. Not because of anything. But other than if you're trying to preach the whole story of Gideon, I promise you we can be here till three if you'd like.

But I don't want to be here till three. But I want to make sure that you know that all of this is valuable and important. But what we see is God is using Gideon.

And we see it in how he calls this army to himself. And it starts with the 22,000. Gideon amasses his army. And he asks, who's afraid, basically. And 12,000 people leave.

[21 : 32] So Gideon's army is now down to 10,000. And then he goes, okay, well, now God says, well, now we can't let you get all the glory. It's got to be about the God of the universe getting glory.

It's got to be about the perfect and holy and righteous God getting glory. So you don't think Israel has done this on their own. And he sets before them this plan to say, okay, go.

And whoever drinks with their head, like lapping like a dog, right? And he whittles down the army from 10,000. I'm not going to go into too much detail more.

But he whittles down the army from 10,000 down to 300. And we see another picture of weakness. Because we see we had 22,000.

That seems like a good number. We should go fight a battle with 22,000. That seems good. God's like, no. Okay, well, we whittled it down to 10,000. Okay, 10,000. Maybe we can do something. No, trust God's strength.

[22 : 42] And he whittles it down to 300. And in the midst of this, you see, I can't imagine trying to even understand what kind of odds we face with the 300 versus Midian's armies.

In this story, there must be fear and worry amongst the warriors, amongst Gideon's camp.

And yet, we see that if you fast forward to chapter 8, it talks about how there were 120,000 men fallen from the battle.

And so, what happens is, is Gideon destroys the altar of Baal. And then God calls him to go fight Midian's armies.

And he defeats them. God is using Gideon in such a way, even though he is small, even though his forces are tiny, then the army is clearly bigger than 300.

[23 : 51] 300. So, he goes on and he starts fighting these battles against the armies of Midian. And he fights first the princes of Midian and then the kings of Midian. And his army is clearly smaller than Midian's forces.

In Judges chapter 8, alone, now Zeba, which again, here we go. Zeba and Zalmunna were in Karkor with their army, about 15,000 men. All of who were left with the army of people of the east, for there had fallen 120,000 men who drew the sword.

God uses Gideon to defeat the armies of Midian. God has given Gideon a purpose.

He gives them a calling and he uses them as he calls them to this purpose. And I know that war is a hard thing for us to just kind of nonchalantly discuss. This war between God's people and the Midianites.

And yet, this is the enemy of God and God is at work through them to restore to Israel, not just their land, but to restore to them the right worship of God.

[25 : 03] And I want to remind us that this is what actually happens, that God uses Gideon to accomplish his purposes.

To bring his kingdom to bear, to restore Israel to right worship, to right relationship with him. He is actually using Gideon to defeat the enemies of God.

And so God is about using his people for his purposes. Not just winning these battles, but for his purposes.

God is using us. God is using you. We don't sit idly by. If you think back on the verse I shared from 1 Timothy, it's one thing for us to admit that God came into this world to save sinners.

And we have to admit ourselves as sinners before we can see ourselves in this salvation that God graciously pours out and cares deeply for us. But for this reason, I was shown mercy.

[26 : 05] In verse 16, it says, So that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience. That God might use us to display the beauty of the gospel.

And we talk about this a lot. I feel like I hear Will and Derek and our elders talk about this. It's this idea of God's grace to us and God's grace through us. That God is not just calling us, but he's working through us.

And so we see a picture of that in the story of Gideon. That though he is weak, he is being used. And God is accomplishing his goals. God is bringing his kingdom to bear.

And God is continuing to do that in you and in me. And in his people. Not just the ones worshiping here at Southwood. But in his people all over. So God is working through not just Gideon in this story.

He's working through all of us. God is calling us to himself. To love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength. But to work through us to love our neighbors as we're called to love ourselves.

[27 : 20] And so I want to make sure you hear this. That though Gideon admitted all this weakness that he had as the lowest of his family. The youngest, the lowest of the clans. Weakness is not a barrier that God overcomes.

But a way that God shows his grace to others. Yes, God truly does overcome weakness. I understand that. Our weakness against sin. I truly understand.

But God shows his grace through weakness. And so when we as weak people admit and know our weaknesses and trust in the God who is stronger and bigger and more powerful.

The God who can actually defeat death itself. We can see that God is actually using our weakness and using his grace through us.

So that we might love our neighbor. So that we might serve others. So that we might care for our friends and our enemies. And I know some of you may think, this isn't me.

[28 : 26] I can't do this for God. God would never use me. And yet we can fall into the sin of underestimating God's power. We can underestimate God's strength and what he can do and what he cannot do.

I can still hear myself as a young believer in college looking at people with disdain and anger and frustration.

And then within months seeing their lives transformed. And at a time in my life when I say God would never do anything in so and so's life.

We see Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit transform sinners into saints. God is using his people to accomplish his grace going forward into the world.

You yourself are important and valuable as people in God's kingdom. And I think a lot of times we forget that God has called us and he's using us.

[29 : 40] And that we have value for the work that he's doing. I was thinking about, I know it doesn't look like it now. But I used to have hair, a lot more hair. And if you're, I don't know, older than, let's just say, 25.

You may have known the 90s. And the 90s was a wild time for me because I was in 1990. I was 10 years old. And back in the day, my parents would hand me \$9.

And I would walk probably a mile and a half to the barbershop that was built onto the side of the garage at this like massively busy street in my little hometown in South Carolina.

And I share all that because there's something about that barbershop that I'll never be able to forget. And there's this picture that I had to stare at every time I got what used to be hair cut.

And that is that I know I'm, there's this sign, it's a little boy praying. And it said, I know I'm somebody because God don't make no junk.

[30 : 51] God don't make no junk. And I used to, I used to, I remember looking at this and thinking about it over and over. And I mean, I used to, that's probably something I could have recited as a kid. And I just remember this, this picture standing out of me and it reminds me of God's great value and love for his people that he would be willingly and gladly able to, people that have turned to idolatry, people who have turned away from God.

He stoops in and calls Gideon to restore his people to right relationship, to right worship. He stoops in and uses Gideon to give God's people opportunities to worship the true God of the universe.

By his grace, he stoops down and cares for God's people. And uses a weak, the littlest, the last of the family to make God real to his people.

And this little sign was a reminder to me as I thought about the value that you have in God's kingdom, that God has transformed you.

The gospel has given us a new identity that we've been made, new creations, new creatures in Christ. We have been given a new identity as sons and daughters of the living God, king over all the universe, that we have been made a treasured possession, that we are as holy people, that we are a royal priesthood.

[32 : 22] And so you have a value and a reality that you can reflect and shine forth to a watching world. You are somebody called by God and used by God.

And God is not done using weakness for his glory and for his kingdom. He's not done pouring out his grace so that we might shine forth his goodness.

He is continuing to use weakness this very day with those of you in this room. And ultimately we see as God both calls Gideon and he uses Gideon, there's something that happens and that is that God shows his own power on display, right?

We see that God is showing forth his ability, his power as he helps Gideon to walk through this plan and bring God's people back to himself and defeat the enemies of God.

And in chapter 8, verses 22 through 23, we kind of see it kind of pointedly said by Gideon. He says, the men of Israel said to Gideon, right? Rule over us, you and your son and your grandson also, for you have saved us from the hand of Midian, right?

[33 : 46] Here's an opportunity for Gideon to say, yes, you're welcome. I did it all. I'm great and I have made it happen. And we see him say, I will not rule over you.

And my son will not rule over you. The Lord will rule over you. The same Lord who he has trusted in the midst of this entire story. The same God who has carried him through by God's grace, he has brought him through from not just defeating the idols of Baal, but to defeat the armies of Midian with just 300 people, to defeating the princes and kings and restoring back to Israel their land.

God will rule over you. Who does Gideon lift high when he says that? Not my son. He says, no kingly lineage. He lifts high God and says, this will be your ruler.

He's pointing back to everything God has done. Midian will not rule over you. Baal will not rule over you. Gideon will not rule over you.

Gideon points to the God who will rule over you. He was the one who was with Gideon when he destroyed the altars of Baal.

[35 : 08] I will go with you. He is the one who sends him to the camp of his enemies and brings him back safely. He is the one who whittles down the army of Gideon to 300 and still defeats the armies of Midian.

Then God gets the glory through Gideon and he points the people of Israel, not to himself, but the God who will rule over all of them.

And I wish with all my heart and soul that this was the end of the story and we could just stop there and be like, yay, God wins and Gideon's great. And we hold Gideon up as like a great picture of faith.

And he is in this sense, but there's a warning we want to make sure we finish with. There's a warning to all of us who are weak, all of us who are sinners in need of a Savior, all of us who are sinners who struggle as we see that Gideon doesn't finish perfectly.

Right? In chapter 8, we see that Gideon goes on after defeating the enemies of God, after all that God has done, Gideon stumbles.

[36 : 17] Gideon falls. Gideon falls and turns away from God. Gideon made an ephod of all these gold earrings and gold jewelry.

And he makes this priestly vest. And it's described to us in Leviticus and the different ways that we can. But it's a priestly vest and he makes this out of gold.

And it's meant to be a reminder of something that was used in worship. And for some reason, maybe there's no real description of why he does it. But Gideon makes this ephod of gold.

And perhaps it was to tell God's people that God was with him. Perhaps it was about to have more control over God's people. We don't know the motivation. And there's not a lot of clear direction in the commentaries and the different ways they talk about.

But whatever motivation, because we don't really know about the state of worship in Israel immediately following Gideon's victories.

[37 : 26] What we do know is that Gideon oversteps God's commands. And it becomes a source of sin for Gideon and Israel.

And it ruins their worship. Gideon made an ephod over it and put it in his city in Ophrah. And all Israel hoored after it there. And it became a snare to Gideon and to his family. So Midian was subdued before the people of Israel.

And they raised their hands there no more. And the land had rest for 40 years in the days of Gideon. That even in Gideon's victory and rest, we see Gideon stumbling and sin.

And Israel was snared in it as well. Gideon's disobedience is before us as a warning.

He was called by God. He was used by God. He gave glory to God. And he still disobeys God. Furthermore, if you read the story on, he goes on to have a son named Abimelech.

[38 : 31] Abimelech is a Hebrew word that tells us son of the king. So out of one side of his mouth, we hear him say, no, me and my son will not rule over you. And then out of the other side of his mouth, he says, here's my son Abimelech.

I just mean son of the king. And we see that in Gideon, though he's given this victory, though he proclaims God will rule, he turns to sin.

And his son Abimelech is kind of a picture of that. And then the verses here in chapter 8 says, it says, the minute that Gideon dies, right?

As soon as Gideon died, the people of Israel turned again and went after the Baals and the idols. This is a warning against our sinful hearts. It's a reminder to take the words of the scripture seriously.

To fix our eyes on Christ. The only one who has been the king over all things for all time and is perfect and will never fail. It's a reminder to not fix our hearts on the affections of the things of this world.

[39 : 40] Fame, money, power, the idols of our age. It's a reminder that we are called to fix our eyes on Jesus, the God of the universe who defeated sin and death.

It's a reminder that we are not far from temptation. It's a reminder that we are weak. And Jesus is strong. There have been a lot of wonderful, amazing pictures of God's faithfulness to our weakness.

Babies brought into the covenant family. Beautiful. A reminder. A reminder from DJ and Angela just about the early days of having kids.

And I felt that same way. And I was thinking on when we had our first child. And it was late at night when she was born.

And it was a tough labor. And I remember somewhat some complications. And it's late at night. And I'm, and Janet is my wife.

[40 : 47] And she is worn out and falls asleep. And I'm handed this brand new life. Terrified out of my mind. Just absolutely, like, I, and I, and I knew Janet was there.

And Janet was fine. And it was, we were fine together. But at the end of the day, I also felt this incredible weakness. Like, I would never be able to do what I need to do. I've never felt more helpless.

Never felt more scared in my life than sitting there alone in the quiet, like, 1 a.m. Holding this new baby. My wife's asleep. And looking into her face and saying, I do not have what it takes.

I do not have what it takes to be a good dad. And I'm so grateful that our God looks to people like me and lets me be a dad and hold my child and love my child and walk with my child.

Because he hasn't just called me to be a dad. He actually expects me to walk through all of life with her and my son. It's more than just, more than just a title that I'm in my weakness as I look to my children, as I look at them even now.

[42 : 11] I'm reminded that I am incapable. There are new problems every day in parenting. There are new problems every day in life. There are new things that remind me, not just in that moment, but every day of how weak I am.

And how much I need the God of the universe to step in. And I'm tempted to run away. I'm tempted to let my fears win.

But God, in his sovereignty, in his grace, is strong enough to carry us. That moment of weakness is a moment that I turn to God and remember that he is the one who is strong enough, not just to carry me, but to carry my wife, my children, and my life.

The God of the universe, the God of Gideon, who uses weakness, who brings strength out of that weakness. He is with you. And he will be with you.

He loves you. And he will use your weakness for his glory, no matter what you feel, no matter what you do.

[43 : 19] He will bring it to pass. Let's pray. Father, we're grateful for your word in this time together. Lord, would you use our worship?

Would you use your word to change and transform us, to encourage us, to make us more and more like Jesus? And would you bless us today to remember your great strength despite our weaknesses?

Lord, we love you. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. For more information, visit us online at southwood.org.