



When I was a senior in high school, I had to do an oral presentation in class. It was like a term paper with research but it was spoken rather than written. When it was time for me to stand before the class and speak, I was so nervous that all I could do was laugh.

Seriously. I just laughed and laughed. Uncontrollable laughter. Nervous laughter. The kind of laughter that would make you pee your pants. (Thankfully I didn't do that!) There has to be some psychological explanation for this nervous reaction. Finally, after what seemed an eternity, the teacher seeing my pain and embarrassment, cut me some slack, let me sit down, and told me to just write a paper using my research.

If you had told me that day that God would call me to a speaking ministry, I would have used my experience with laughter to laugh at you. What an absurd suggestion! I would be too nervous to speak. I wouldn't be qualified to speak. I would be too embarrassed.

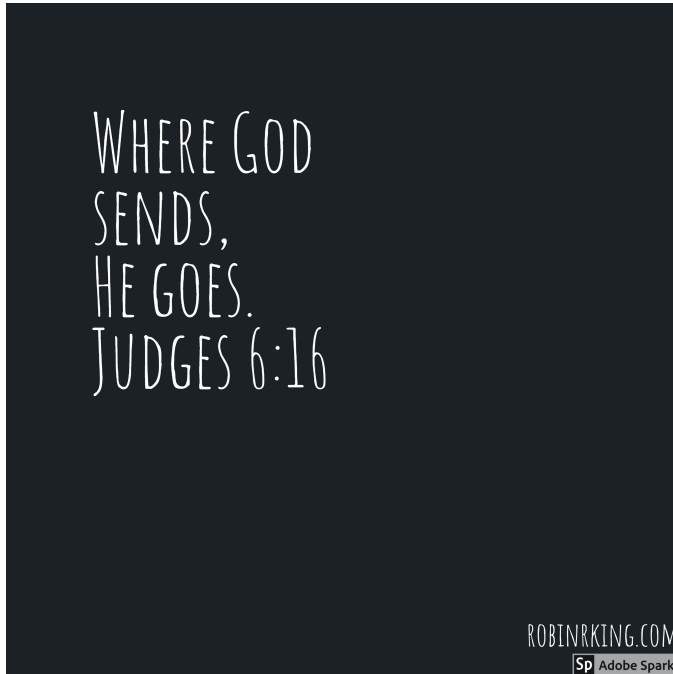
There's a man in the Bible who probably had the same reaction when God called him into service. His name was Gideon and when we meet Gideon, he is threshing wheat in a winepress to hide it from the Midianites, an enemy of the Israelites. An angel of the Lord approached Gideon and called him Mighty Warrior. Now that's a funny thing to call someone who is hiding behind a winepress! But God was calling Gideon into service to fight the enemy and save His people.

Gideon must have found it funny too because he begins to protest his calling by listing his limitations. "My family is the weakest and I am the smallest or lowest in my household." I can empathize with Gideon. I can hear my words; "I am not qualified, I am too nervous, I am too embarrassed." But God told Gideon to go in the strength he had, that He was sending him, and that He would be with him. In other words, God would give Gideon the power and the equipping to do what He had called him to do.

What has God called you to do for him that you feel unqualified, unequipped, too afraid, and maybe too embarrassed to do? For me, it is the Speaking Ministry that he has called me to. But because God has called us, we can trust that his promises to Gideon are His promises to us too. Where God sends he goes and when he calls he empowers and equips.

It's not about us, it's about HIM! Now go, Mighty Warrior!

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Judges 6 New International Version (NIV)

⁶ The Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord, and for seven years he gave them into the hands of the Midianites. ² Because the power of Midian was so oppressive, the Israelites prepared shelters for themselves in mountain clefts, caves and strongholds. ³ Whenever the Israelites planted their crops, the Midianites, Amalekites, and other eastern peoples invaded the country. ⁴ They camped on the land and ruined the crops all the way to Gaza and did not spare a living thing for Israel, neither sheep nor cattle nor donkeys. ⁵ They came up with their livestock and their tents like swarms of locusts. It was impossible to count them or their camels; they invaded the land to ravage it. ⁶ Midian so impoverished the Israelites that they cried out to the Lord for help.

⁷ When the Israelites cried out to the Lord because of Midian, ⁸ he sent them a prophet, who said, "This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: I brought you up out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. ⁹ I rescued you from the hand of the Egyptians. And I delivered you from the hand of all your oppressors; I drove them out before you and gave you their land. ¹⁰ I said to you, 'I am the Lord your God; do not worship the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you live.' But you have not listened to me."

¹¹ The angel of the Lord came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to



Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites. ¹² When the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, he said, “The Lord is with you, mighty warrior.”

¹³ “Pardon me, my lord,” Gideon replied, “but if the Lord is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our ancestors told us about when they said, ‘Did not the Lord bring us up out of Egypt?’ But now the Lord has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midian.”

¹⁴ The Lord turned to him and said, “Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian’s hand. Am I not sending you?”

¹⁵ “Pardon me, my lord,” Gideon replied, “but how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family.”

¹⁶ The Lord answered, “I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites, leaving none alive.”

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