

## 1. Going out of Ephesians – I wanted to flesh out our last study

- A. Some of what we've seen in the prayer of Ephesians 3 so far
- 1). We need to be strengthened in the inner man to understand these great truths
    - a). And to win that fight with our flesh to surrender to Christ
  - 2). We want to surrender to Christ because that allows him to settle down in our hearts
    - a). When he is at home in our heart – not treating him as a guest – not walling off areas  
He begins to manifest himself to us – He becomes very real in our lives
  - 3). But this going to take faith
    - a). Faith to believe all this prayer is offering is for us
      - 1a). Love that is beyond understanding and fullness of God in our lives
      - b). Faith to believe that surrendering ourselves fully to his will, will be worth it
        - 1a). Faith to trust Christ with the entirety of our life
  - 4). Then we looked at the balance of faith – nothing passive about it
    - a). It is active obedience – it is working out what God has worked in
      - 1a). True faith moves us towards surrender – Christlikeness – into God's will
- B. I was thinking – where can we find this in Scripture? Then it hit me – Gideon – he lived this out
- 1). God moves him from carnality – and spiritual indifference  
To a step-by-step surrender – resulting in personal revival where God is very real in his life

**Thought:** This may be you this morning – you feel far from God – be encouraged that can change

- A. We can move from where we are to what Paul is talking about in Ephesians 3

## 2. Background - Judges 6:1-10

- A. Israel is being disciplined by God because of their sin
- 1). They have been handed them over to the Midianites who are brutally oppressing them  
They live in constant fear – their life has been reduced to hiding in the mountains and in caves
- B. Eventually they cry out to the Lord for help - deliverance
- 1). God answers that cry by raising up Gideon to lead Israel against Midian
    - a). Result = Israel defeats Midian and enjoys 40 years of peace under Gideon's leadership

**Transition:** That's the end result – What we want to see is what was Gideon like and how did that change

- A. Gideon's story starts in v. 11

## I. THE CHARACTER OF GIDEON

**Intro:** What I want you to see is that Gideon was a very ordinary man –nothing unusual about him at all

- A. He was not make a mega-talented, ultra-charismatic man - he did not ooze self-confidence
- 1). What he was, was fearful, timid and uncertain - In other words - a lot like us

**Transition:** let's look at the make-up of this man God chooses to use. I find this very encouraging

### 1. Gideon was a fearful and timid man

- A. This is the characteristic that surfaces most in this chapter

**Jdg 6:11 (ESV)** Now the angel of the LORD came and sat under the terebinth (Oak tree) at Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son *Gideon was beating out wheat in the winepress to hide it from the Midianites.*

- 1). You don't thresh wheat in a wine press - But that's where we find Gideon - Why?
  - a). He's hiding because he's terrified of the Midianites
  - b). Whenever Israel would plant their crops the Midianites would ride in and take them

- B. We see his timidity in v. 14 – the angel tells Gideon that God wants to use him

And assures him that “God himself is going to send you”

**Jdg 6:14 (ESV)** 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?”

- 1). Does he reply “Fantastic. Finally somebody sees my potential” No! He tries to wriggle out

**Jdg 6:15 (ESV)** 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.*”

- C. Later we’ll see timidity crop up again – God commands him to destroy an idol in his Father’s house

**Jdg 6:27 (ESV)** So Gideon took ten men of his servants and did as the LORD had told him. *But because he was too afraid* of his family and the men of the town to do it by day, he did it by night.

**Thought:** This should encourage you who don’t feel like spiritual “Rambo’s” – Not afraid of anything

- A. This shows us that God calls ordinary, timid, folk like us to work through – we qualify!

**Transition:** But there is another characteristic of Gideon I think we can relate to

## 2. Gideon was an uncertain man

- A. Vs 14 and 16 - God says I’m going to use you Gideon to deliver my people from Midian

- 1). God also assures him – You won’t be alone - I am sending you AND I will be with you

- B. This is kind of out of left field – so Gideon wants to make sure God is really speaking to him

**Jdg 6:17 (ESV)** And he said to him, “If now I have found favor in your eyes, then show me a sign that it is you who speak with me.

- 1). V. 21 The Angel confirms it is God in miraculous way

So Gideon is convinced he is dealing with God

**Jdg 6:22 (ESV)** Then Gideon perceived that he was the angel of the LORD. And Gideon said, *“Alas, O Lord GOD! For now I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face.”*

**Thought 1:** But he’s a double-minded man – “That was God for sure....but maybe not...I don’t know”

- A. The Story of the fleece - “God don’t be upset but I really need another sign”

- 1). Lays wool fleece on ground – “if fleece gets wet but ground stays dry”

“I’ll know this is from you God - that you have called me to this work and it will succeed”

- 2). God does it – So now the issue must be settled in his mind – right? WRONG!

- B. Just in case that was a coincidence - let’s reverse it

- 1). This time lets keep the fleece dry – and have the ground get wet - AGAIN God does it

**Thought:** I love this about God – he understands how radical all this is to Gideon

- A. He understands that Gideon is no hero at this point – He is patiently helping Gideon’s faith

- B. There may be somebody here experiencing the same thing

- 1). You feel that tug to do something that frightens you

You’ve asked God to confirm it - He has - You’ve asked again - He has

- 2). He’s been so patient - kind with you – but there comes a time you must trust and step out

**Transition:** But what can hold us back from stepping out?

- A. I see something Gideon does we’re all prone to - something that hinders us

## 3. Gideon was focusing on himself and not on God

- A. God tells Gideon “I want to use you - I am sending you - I will be with you”

- 1). This is why you’ll succeed - Not because of you - Because of ME!

a). Truth is: God will always enable us to do what He calls us to do

- B. But notice where Gideon’s focus is – Not on God? But on SELF!

**Jdg 6:15 (ESV)** And he said to him, “Please, Lord, how can I save Israel? (**Here’s the reason why I can’t**) Behold, my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, *and I am the least in my father’s house.*”

- 1). He hears the call and immediately looks at his own abilities to assess whether he can do it or not

a). Obvious conclusion **will ALWAYS be - THIS CAN’T WORK**

Not gifted enough - spiritual enough - talented enough – not enough resources... SO NO!

- C. This is exactly what Moses did when God called him to lead Israel out of Egypt
- Moses response: Ex 3:11 (ESV)** But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?”
- 1). God says “Don’t worry Moses, I’ll be with you - you’re not going alone”  
Then explains that he would be God’s spokesman – and assures him I will tell you what to say
    - a). Again Moses can only see his inadequacies - why this CAN’T WORK  
**Ex 4:10 (ESV)** But Moses said to the LORD, “Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, either in the past or since you have spoken to your servant, but I am slow of speech and of tongue.”
    - b). Many believe Moses stuttered  
“Lord, I think you’ve called the wrong boy to be your spokesman. You could do much better. I don’t talk so good!”
  - 2). Notice God’s reply - Remember this whenever God calls you into something  
**Ex 4:11–12 (ESV)** Then the LORD said to him, “Who has made man’s mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the LORD? <sup>(12)</sup> Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak.”
    - a). Moses when was any of this EVER dependent upon your abilities?  
The only thing I want is your availability – I will enable you
    - b). You JUST GO! Trust me to enable you to do what I’ve called you to do

**Point:** Way it always works - You’re NOT adequate to do what God has called you to do

**Paul put it this way: 2 Co 3:5–6 (ESV)** Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, *but our sufficiency is from God, <sup>(6)</sup> who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant...*

**Thought:** Here is A KEY you need to understand in serving God

- A. When God calls you - it’s usually a call out of comfort zone - into things beyond us - new
  - 1). There is usually this sense of inadequacy - regardless of your education - training
- B. Therefore it will *always take faith* to step into God’s calling
  - 1). You will always have to trust in his ability

**Thought:** The encouraging thing we’ll see about the way God works in Gideon

- A. He is going to call him to step out by faith – one step at a time – not all at once
  - 1). We’ll watch Gideon respond one step at a time – just saying “Yes”
  - 2). In the end Gideon is going to do things he never thought he could do  
AND he is going to experience God in a way he never dreamed of
    - a). It is all because of God’s work – God’s initiation – and Gideon simply saying “Yes”
- B. This is what we are seeing in Ephesians 3
  - 1). It is a call to surrender – but it starts with God – He puts those desires in that we work out
    - a). And like Gideon we must respond to those promptings – we must obey  
When we do – one YES at a time – we will be blessed
  - 2). I know that surrender seems huge – but just say YES to the next thing – start there
    - a). One “Yes” gets the ball rolling  
Then eventually there will be another “Yes” – all leading us into great blessings
      - 1a). That is the sheep following the good shepherd into those green pastures isn’t it
  - 3). This is exactly what we will see in Gideon – God is going to raise him up slowly but surely

**Transition:** To see this dynamic in action - look at v. 12

- A. V. 12 God gives Gideon a preview of what is to come

## A Preview of What Is to Come

**Jdg 6:12 (ESV)** And the angel of the LORD appeared to him and said to him, “The LORD is with you, O mighty man of valor.” **(NIV)** ... “The LORD is with you, *mighty warrior.*”

- A. Notice that God sees Gideon much differently than Gideon sees himself
  - 1). Gideon doesn't see himself as a MIGHTY WARRIOR at this point  
He's afraid - timid - hiding in a wine press threshing wheat
- B. What's happening here? God is looking beyond what Gideon is at THAT moment
  - 1). God sees what he's GOING to become through his work in him
  - 2). God is looking at the end of the process
- C. As Gideon steps out by faith – obediently answering God's call
  - 1). God is going to transform this weak - timid man into a MIGHTY WARRIOR
  - 2). God is going to use each circumstance – every trial – every decision to bring this about
    - a). All will be used to train him - strengthen his faith
  - 3). Gideon will be transformed as he goes – at every YES God will become more real  
And Gideon will become stronger
    - a). As he responds one step at a time he will be changed a little bit more into a warrior
- D. He may be looking at you this morning and saying “You are going to become a mighty warrior”
  - 1). I am going to so work in you – that Ephesians 3 becomes true in your life
    - a). You are going to experience me so greatly – going to know my love so thoroughly  
That you are going to do works you never imagined – you are going to be amazed

**Transition:** That brings us to another characteristic of Gideon

## 4. Gideon was experiencing spiritual dullness and apathy

**Jdg 6:12 (ESV)** And the angel of the LORD appeared to him and said to him, “The LORD is with you, O mighty man of valor.”

**His Response: Jdg 6:13 (ESV)** And Gideon said to him, “Please, sir, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all 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 into the hand of Midian.”

- A. I like the honesty here – he wasn't willing to settle for mere words
  - 1). God loves me – Well, when was the last time you really experienced his love - presence
  - 2). Gideon doesn't want to settle for spiritual clichés – He wants something real
- B. Gideon remembers another time when Israel was being oppressed – not by Midian – but by Egypt
  - 1). He remembers what it looked like when God was with them
    - a). How he brought Egypt to its knees – powerfully delivering his people
  - 2). He doesn't see any of that – he's living in constant fear of the Midianites
    - a). If God is with me why doesn't he break the yoke of Midian like he did with Egypt
- C. He says “I'm a Mighty warrior! I don't feel like a God's warrior”.

***“I feel abandoned and forsaken by God”***

**Point:** Who knows the last time Gideon experienced God's touch?

Spiritually he is living in the wilderness - spiritually dull and apathetic - carnal

- A. Rather than experiencing God's love - He sounds disenchanting and bitter at God
- B. That is sad to see one of God's people like that – but it is not uncommon
  - 1). The encouraging thing is – if this is you – Gideon proves that God can change that
  - 2). God wants to change that – He went to Gideon and is stirring him awake
    - a). I pray he will do that with us
    - b). That we will see what the Bible offers – and say I want that – I desire that

c). I pray he will make that desire so great we will do whatever it takes to have it

**Transition:** What could stop us from knowing God like this? I see three things we must deal with

## II. HINDERING THE POWER AND PRESENCE OF GOD IN OUR LIFE

### 1. Lack of prayer

**Jdg 6:7 (ESV)** When the people of Israel *cried out* to the LORD on account of the Midianites,

- A. See over and over in Scripture - when God's people finally cry out to Him - THEN He moves in power
- B. How many revivals start like that? - small group of people gather - desperate for God  
"This is NOT good enough - we NEED YOU"

Like Isaiah: "Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down..."

- 1). God move amongst us - forgive our sin - wake us up
- 2). Visit us in soul converting - addiction breaking - family restoring - sin conquering - Heart igniting  
**POWER**

**Problem:** God has commanded His people to pray without ceasing - but we have ceased to pray

- A. Then we wonder why we don't experience Him as we should? How could we?
  - 1). So much of our Christian experience lives or dies with prayer
  - 2). We may not experience church revival but you will experience personal revival

### 2. Lack of obedience - Sin - keeps us from experiencing God

- A. Gideon wanted to know why they weren't seeing God moving in Israel - God tells us

**Jdg 6:1 (ESV)** The people of Israel *did what was evil* in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD gave them into the hand of Midian seven years.

**Jdg 6:10 (ESV)** 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.*"

- 1). The sin of the people was keeping them from experiencing God - Always does
  - a). It always brings pain rather than blessing

### 3. There was something wrong in the home

**Jdg 6:25 (ESV)** That night the LORD said to him, "Take your father's bull, and the second bull seven years old, and pull down the altar of Baal that your father has, and cut down the Asherah that is beside it

- A. Before God could use him - he had to do something in his own heart - in his own home
  - 1). He had to remove an idol that was competing for the affections of his heart
    - a). To be used by God greatly - God would have to be Number 1

**Point:** So we start with our own heart – so Christ can be at home there – Eph 3

- A. We want to make huge differences in the world – God says start with your own heart – own home

**Transition:** Prayerlessness – sin in our heart and in our home will stop the work of God in our lives

- A. God starts with Gideon's heart – the idol in the house must go
  - 1). The call to intimacy with God is always a call away from idols – anything above him in our heart

#### GIDEON'S RESPONSE

**Jdg 6:27 (ESV)** So Gideon took ten men of his servants and did as the LORD had told him. But because he was too afraid of his family and the men of the town to do it by day, he did it by night.

- A. Notice he's still afraid - trembling - but he chooses to obey – He has said YES at step one – ball is rolling

**Thought:** How important this choice of obedience is?

- A. He says "NO" = whole process ends right there
  - 1). Keeps living in fear – threshing wheat in a wine press - And feeling abandoned by God
- B. OR he says "YES" and enters into a process where God begins to transform him

- 1). Where he begins to come alive spiritually - begins to experience God wonderfully
- 2). Where his life begins to count for eternity - He moves out of the rut and lives the adventure!!!
  - a). So much hinged on this decision! Obedience is so important

**Transition:** We have communion today so I want to close this up early

## CONCLUSION SO FAR: GIDEON TYING INTO EPHESIANS 3

### 1. What did we see in Ephesians 3

- A. We saw that God is the initiator – Paul prays that God would visit us and do something
  - 1). That through his Spirit he would strengthen us in the inner man  
**Eph 3:16 (ESV)** that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being,
    - a). So that we would understand the greatness of what God is offering us
      - 1a). To know the love of God in reality – experience it at its deepest
      - 2a). To be filled with the fullness of God - experiencing his power – presence
    - b). Paul's desires is that we see that and desire that above anything else
      - 1a). That, that desire would cause us to be willing to do whatever that takes
    - c). If you lack this desire start there – pray the Spirit would give it to you
    - d). You may be apathetic and indifferent this morning – God can change that
      - 1a). That is what we see with Gideon – God initiates his move out of carnality
  - 2). What will it take to experience God like this – surrender – Christ at home in your heart  
**Eph 3:17 (ESV)** so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith
    - a). Make himself at home – settle down – no walled off areas
    - b). Will take faith to fight the flesh that will fight that surrender
      - 1a). Faith that God really wants you to experience all that is in Eph. 3  
 That love that surpasses knowledge – the fullness of God
      - 2a). Faith that is much greater than anything the world can offer
    - c). We saw in our study two weeks ago that true faith is always active
      - 1a). We are watching that in Gideon – it is just saying YES to God  
 One decision at a time
    - d). But as we say YES – as we make that right choice one step at a time
      - 1a). We saw in John 6 that Christ will make himself at home in our lives  
 And he will begin to manifest himself to us – become real in our lives
- B. I want what Ephesians 3 has to offer – I want what God is going to do in Gideon
  - 1). He is going to use him greatly – and he is going to manifest himself to him intimately
  - 2). Ephesians 3 has caused a cry to rise up in my heart – God strengthen me in the inner man
    - a). And do whatever it takes for me to experience your love and fullness like this
    - b). If there is anything hindering that – please show me and strengthen me to change that
  - 3). What God wants to do is exciting – personal revival – living above the temporal
    - a). A life filled with him – his touch – experiencing his love

**Transition:** That brings us to our time of communion

## COMMUNION

### 1. Communion reminds us of why any of this is possible

- A. Why we would have the Holy Spirit in us – causing us to desire greater things than the world can offer
  - 1). Initiating all that we see in Ephesians 3 and in Gideon’s life
- B. Why the power is available to turn away from the temporal to follow God
- C. Why we can experience a love that is so great it is beyond human understanding  
And can experience the greatness of God – being filled with the fullness of God
- D. Why people like us can be so wonderfully blessed

## 2. This is all available because we are God’s children

- A. Why are we God’s children – again because God did something
  - 1). He sent his Son to a cross – so that which was keeping us from him would be removed
    - a). Our sin demanded justice – it made us objects of wrath  
Children of hell NOT children of God
- B. But through the shed blood of Christ on the cross – those records have been wiped clean  
**Is 1:18 (ESV)** “Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.
  - 1). Through his work – his initiation – his going to the cross  
Then his work in drawing me to himself
    - a). God no longer has anything against me – NOT GUILTY
  - 2). Not only NOT GUILTY but RIGHTEOUS in Christ  
**Ro 5:19 (ESV)** For as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous.
    - a). Because of what God did – I move from the many who were sinners – hell bound  
To those who are righteous – my address changed from hell to heaven
    - b). What happened? God moved! God did something  
Eph 2:1-5 (NIV) As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, (2) in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. (3) All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. (4) But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, (5) made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved.
      - 1a). I was lost but now I’m found – why? Because God found me!
      - 2a). I was dead but now I’m alive – why? Because God gave me life!
      - 3a). I will be with my God for all of eternity – why? Because I’m holding on to him – NO – because he’s holding on to me

**Point:** We celebrate today God’s work in our life

- A. That work that started in eternity past – when he chose us – Eph 1:4
- B. That work that was made possible 2000 years ago when he went to the cross – John 3:16
- C. That work that was applied to our lives when he drew us to himself and gave us the faith to believe – John 6:44 and Ephesians 2:8
- D. Today we celebrate the whole of our salvation and what God did to accomplish that
  - 1). The bread speaks of the life of Christ – his broken and bruised body
  - 2). The cup speaks of the death of Christ – His shed blood that made salvation possible

## 3. Pray for the bread

## 4. Pray for the cup