

**Review: What we've seen****1. We've been looking at the life of Gideon – tying it into Ephesians 3**

- A. Paul is praying for amazing things
  - 1). Knowing the love of God that surpasses human understanding – deep - amazing
  - 2). Knowing the fullness of God
- B. He prays we would be strengthened in the inner man
  - 1). Strengthened to understand the greatness of what is being offered
  - 2). Strengthened in those desires to want it – so we won't settle
- C. He then said this is going to take faith to experience this –
  - 1). Faith that believes it is truly for us – that God wants to do this for us
  - 2). Faith to believe the surrender it takes for Christ will settle down in our hearts is worth it
    - a). Our flesh and the devil will lie to us and say it isn't
      - 1a). Devil's lies – satisfaction will never come from surrendering it all to God  
You must keep control – the lie he told Eve
  - 3). When we do surrender – it starts this beautiful snowball effect
    - a). Christ settles in - is at home in our heart – John 14:24  
He starts to manifest himself (John 14:21) – there is that love that passes understanding  
AND we start to sense that fullness of God
  - 4). We saw that surrender to God's will is not passive – Let God and Let God
    - a). It is very active – we are working out what God worked in – Phil 2
    - b). We are straining towards the goal – Phil 3
    - c). We are running with excellence – 1 Cor 9
    - d). You can't climb while coasting  
You coast away from God not into his love  
You coast into ungodliness and lose the touch of God on your life

**2. We have been tying the life of Gideon into the faith of Ephesians 3**

- A. We've seen that he was spiritually apathetic – bitter at God – hadn't sensed God in his life for??
- B. Then God began to move – he approached Gideon – he started to lift him up
  - 1). That is my prayer for you – internet – if you haven't sensed God in your life  
I pray he will come and strengthen you in the inner man – create new desires
  - 2). So we are watching Gideon come alive – experience God more and more
    - a). But it takes faith say “YES” to what God is asking him to do
- C. We saw how these Yes's started in Gideon's heart – an idol in his house
  - 1). You can't have God and idols – God and other things above him
    - a). So God says “it must go” – Gideon afraid – still did it – he said YES
    - b). That started the ball rolling – God becoming more and more real to Gideon  
It is going to end up with Gideon in full revival – experiencing his love and fullness
- D. We saw that Gideon needed to learn that God was enough – no matter what the odds
  - 1). God taught Gideon this by letting him fail – do his best and still fall short – 32,000
  - 2). Then reducing that 32,000 down to 300 against 135,000
    - a). God is teaching him that when your in God's will – odds don't matter one bit
- E. We saw how Gideon used fear to strengthen him – he was timid and afraid
  - 1). When God told him to do something he said YES while he was trembling
    - a). He used that fear to drive him to God – therefore it became an ally

- 2). Fear will either paralyze us – stop us from serving God  
Or push us to God where we serve him in his strength
  - a). What a valuable lesson to learn how to use fear to propel us to God

**Transition:** Let's move on to the next thing we see in Gideon's life

## I. GIDEON MUST LEARN TO TRUST GOD WITH RISKY FAITH

### 1. The Christian life is a life of faith

2 Co 5:7 (ESV) for we *walk by faith*, not by sight.

**Rom 1:17 (NKJV)** For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from *faith to faith*; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."

- A. In our walk we move from one choice of faith to another
  - 1). One YES to another – all taking faith – all trusting God

**Thought:** Have you noticed that many times that call from God moves us out of the comfort zone

- A. There will be many "Yes's" on the path of growth that will be difficult
  - 1). The way we respond to those will determine what kind of Christianity we experience

**Transition:** That is exactly what we are learning from Gideon

- A. If he wasn't willing to take risks in his faith – he would not see God move like he did

### 2. Remember that Gideon wanted to see the mighty works his father's had seen

**Jdg 6:12–13 (ESV)** And the angel of the LORD appeared to him and said to him, "The LORD is with you, O mighty man of valor." <sup>(13)</sup> 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. That is a great desire Gideon – but that is going to require something from you
  - 1). They saw him move like that because they trusted him  
They stepped out by faith in risky ways – depending upon him to come through
    - a). They said YES when it wasn't easy to say YES – when they would have rather said NO
- B. God tells Moses to confront Pharaoh the most powerful man on earth – "Let my people go"
  - 1). He was afraid but he did it – he said "Yes" – He saw God move? YES!
    - a). He watched as God used his words to bring Egypt to its knees  
He walked through the Red Sea
- C. He tells Joshua – here is how you're going to take the walled city of Jericho  
You walk around it once for 6 days – on the seventh walk around it 7 times then yell
  - 1). You think that plan was easy to take to his people
  - 2). He said YES – and he saw God move
    - a). Can you imagine – they start to yell and the walls begin to quake then crumble
    - b). One thing remains – Rahab's apartment on the wall – they promised her

**Point:** So Gideon – don't sit there all bitter at God – feeling abandoned – because he's not moving

- A. God told you why he's not moving – you were saying NO to him – Israel is living in sin
  - 1). You want to see God move like he did with the forefathers – then act like them
- B. I've seen so many believers complain about God not moving in their lives – not providing
  - 1). But they are living carnal – worldly lives – he is not their priority
    - a). They are living in a way he said would not be blessed  
Then blaming him for their lack of blessing

**Transition:** So Gideon must be willing to say YES when he'd rather say NO!

- A. Now watch the amazing results – this is incredible

## II. THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF GOD ALONG THE WAY

### 1. God will encourage you along the way

- A. He knows it's not easy to say YES to everything he asks you to do  
 1). He won't call you then leave you alone – he will come to you – encourage you

### 2. Let's pick up the story in Judges 7:9

**Jdg 7:9 (ESV)** That same night the LORD said to him, “Arise, go down against the camp...

- A. That same night – what night? When God reduced Gideon's army down to 300 men against 135,000  
 1). That same night - God calls Gideon to step onto the battlefield – it has just got real!  
 B. Now faith is really being tested - Will you still obey Gideon

**Notice:** God understands this isn't easy – Gideon is afraid – obedience here is hard

- A. God patiently – lovingly – gently comes alongside to help

**Transition:** Let's look at how God encourages Gideon

### 3. God gives Gideon another promise

**Jdg 7:9 (ESV)** That same night the LORD said to him, “Arise, go down against the camp, *for I have given it into your hand.*

- A. This is fourth time God's promised Gideon that HE would deliver Midian into his hands  
 1). God comes alongside – and says “Gideon I'll do it – You'll have victory because of me”  
 a). Don't look at the circumstances look at me  
 B. Gideon don't let your faith fail now – you've come too far – just another YES  
 1). Some come so far – serve God – then lose their first love – stop saying YES  
 They end their life in failure - heartbreaking  
 a). Don't do that Gideon – keep going – keep trusting - keep saying YES

### 4. God gives Gideon another sign

- A. This is at least the fourth time God confirmed His calling with a sign  
 1). The angel back home (food) - the Fleece (twice)  
 NOW he is going to use the words of the enemy  
 2). So there is the promise - then right after that a sign that CONFIRMS the promise  
 B. Notice how God orchestrates circumstances to encourage Gideon

**Directs Gideon - Jdg 7:10–12 (ESV)** But if you are afraid to go down (he still was), go down to the camp with Purah your servant. <sup>(11)</sup> And you shall hear what they say, and afterward your hands shall be strengthened to go down against the camp.” Then he went down with Purah his servant to the outposts of the armed men who were in the camp. <sup>(12)</sup> And the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the people of the East lay along the valley like locusts in abundance, and their camels were without number, as the sand that is on the seashore in abundance.

**Uses tongue of enemy: Jdg 7:13–14 (ESV)** When Gideon came, behold, a man was telling a dream to his comrade. And he said, “Behold, I dreamed a dream, and behold, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian and came to the tent and struck it so that it fell and turned it upside down, so that the tent lay flat.” <sup>(14)</sup> And his comrade answered, “This is no other than the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel; God has given into his hand Midian and all the camp.”

- 1). I love this – God says to Gideon in v. 9 “I have given the Midianite camp into your hands”  
 2). Now God orchestrates is to Gideon hears a Midianite say the same exact thing  
 “God has given Midian and all the camp into Gideon's hand”

**Transition:** So God has moved in Gideons life -

- A. Taking this man who was threshing wheat in a wine press – terrified - apathetic  
 1). He has started to say YES to God – dealt with the sin in his home – tore down the idol

- B. He is still afraid the whole way – but saying YES the whole way – one yes at a time
  - 1). We have seen Gideon growing – afraid but on the battlefield
- C. In v. 15 he FINALLY Gideon gets it – I can trust God – I don't have to be afraid
  - 1). All along he has been responding even though he was afraid
    - a). Now finally fear is defeated
    - b). It is defeated on the battlefield – while he is serving
      - 1a). Not while he is waiting to feel courageous at home

### III. THE RESULT OF OBEDIENCE

#### 1. The place of fear is turned into a place of worship

**Jdg 7:15 (ESV)** As soon as Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, *he worshiped.*

- A. He says YES to God even though he is afraid
  - 1). And God meets him so graciously – he manifests himself so greatly  
It turns this place of fear into a place of worship!
- B. He's gone from complaining – that he never sees God move in his life TO THIS
  - 1). I can picture him on the front lines - hands in the air  
“God you're so good! Using somebody like me to do this. Thank you for what you've done.”
  - 2). He's experiencing the love of God and the fullness of God
- C. God initiated all this - Gideon began to say YES – Working out what God had worked in
  - 1). The result is incredible

**Transition:** Not only is he worshipping this God who had become so alive in his life – look at the next step

#### 2. God turns this timid man into a mighty warrior

**Jdg 7:15 (ESV)** As soon as Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, he worshiped. And he returned to the camp of Israel and said, *“Arise, for the LORD has given the host of Midian into your hand.”*

- A. The mouse has become a lion – why? It's all God!
  - 1). God approached him – initiated holy desires – started to stir his heart to want more  
And step b step he lead him to spiritual life and spiritual strength
    - a). Gideon's part – just go along with the plan

**Thought:** We need to see something here

- A. Gideon is not delivered from his fear UNTIL he is on the battlefield – risky faith
  - 1). Just like the Jordan didn't dry up UNTIL the feet of the priest hit the water
  - 2). On that battlefield Gideon was changed radically – his fear was defeated
- B. Think of this – this is great news
  - 1). Gideon didn't feel adequate – didn't feel like a mighty warrior – weak and afraid
    - a). But God wasn't concerned with any of that – he just wanted him to say YES
    - b). As he stepped out he was changed along the way – from mouse to lion
  - 2). So encouraging – none of us have to stay where we are right now
    - a). God is able to lift us – change us – use us – just say YES to the next thing

#### 3. Gideon is now fully trusting in God

**Jdg 7:15 (ESV)** ... And he returned to the camp of Israel and said, *“Arise, for the LORD has given the host of Midian into your hand.”*

- A. God has arranged circumstances to convince him - his best wasn't good enough
  - 1). He's allowed him to fail
- B. God has continued to tell him - I will do this Gideon - just say “Yes”

- 1). He has confirmed it with signs
- C. Finally Gideon gets it! Finally he truly believes it (It takes awhile = normal)
  - 1). It's not about me! It's not dependent upon my abilities  
My weakness doesn't matter – He is strong enough and he will get it done  
“It's ALL about Him! We just need to obey. Get up boys FOR THE LORD has given the host of Midian into our hands!”
  - 2). This man who was so timid - leads this puny army of 300 into battle - and he's excited  
“I don't know how God is going to do this BUT I can't wait to find out. AND I have front row seats to watch”

**Transition:** Let's move to the battle – amazing

## IV. THE BATTLE IS THE LORD'S

**Jdg 7:16 (ESV)** And he divided the 300 men into three companies and put trumpets into the hands of all of them and empty jars, with torches inside the jars.

### 1. Does the weapons they take strike you as strange?

Can you hear Gideon: “Ok...the 300 of us are going into battle against 135,000 well armed men. Here's your trumpet and here's your empty jars”

“uhhh... Gideon... shouldn't we... maybe...take some swords?”

“No... this is what God told me to take. here's the plan (vs 17-18) just watch me and follow my lead. When I blow my trumpet you blow yours and shout ‘for the Lord and for Gideon. Sound good?’”

**Thought:** Notice Gideon has become an example - a man of faith and courage

- A. **The men follow him!** His faith in the Lord has become infectious - inspiring others
  - 1). They are going to experience God in a greater way because of his faith – his trust
  - 2). God help us to be like that - infectious – inspiring others
- B. Make us like Jonathan - Saul's son - Israel facing huge Philistine army – 1 Samuel 14
  - 1). Tells armor bearer  
“I've got an idea. Let's go up to their camp - just you and me - Let's see what God will do”  
“Nothing can hinder the Lord from saving whether by many or few”
    - a). It's not about us – its about him – if he's with us the odds are on our side
      - 1a). He inspires the armor bearer's faith
      - b). They see God move - God uses them to rout the Philistines
    - 2). Don't you just love people like that - simple - child like faith  
“God can do it - no problem - Let's go for it. Exciting isn't it!”
      - a). You watch with curiosity – either he's crazy or he really is hearing from God
        - 1a). God uses him or her – it inspires you to be different
        - 2a). I want to be that kind of person
  - C. I imagine most great works of God have begun with things like this  
This is beyond us - but LET'S SEE WHAT GOD WILL DO!  
**J. Hudson Taylor:** All God's giants have been weak men who did great things for God because they reckoned on God being with them.

**Transition:** Let's see how they saw God move!

### 2. Watch how God provides the swords

**Jdg 7:22 (ESV)** When they blew the 300 trumpets, the LORD set every man's sword against his comrade and against all the army. And the army fled...

- A. They started out without any swords – they ended with 135,000

- 1). God caused the enemy to turn on itself
- B. Brothers and sisters - You don't see that while your threshing wheat in a wine press
  - 1). You see that when you're on the battlefield trusting God  
When you're taking risks for God

### 3. This strange plan of God turns out to be much more effective than anything Gideon could have come up with

- A. The 300 men completely rout the army of Midian  
And they learn a valuable lesson - the Battle TRULY is the Lord's
- B. What about us? It's all just a yes away – get the ball rolling

### 4. Let's tie that back into Ephesians

- A. I want to experience what God says is available for me
  - 1). To really know the love of God that surpasses human understanding
  - 2). To be filled with the fullness of God
  - 3). I know that will lead to being used by God
    - a). These are all the same things we saw in Gideon's life

**Transition:** Before we finish I had a question last week

### 5. Question last week: Where do we start to say yes? I'm glad you asked

- A. Again – don't complicate this – start to say YES to what you already know you should be doing
- B. You know God wants you to read your Bible
 

**1 Pet 2:2 (NASB)** like newborn babes, long for (crave) the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation,

**2 Ti 2:15 (KJV)** Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

  - 1). Say Yes to reading your Bible – you can neglect it and be spiritually alive
- C. You know God wants you to pray
 

**1 Th 5:16-18 (NKJV)** Rejoice always, (17) *pray without ceasing*, (18) in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

  - 1). Say YES to praying – don't put it off – neglect it and you'll be weak
- D. You know God wants you in church
 

**Heb 10:25 (NASB)** not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.

**Heb 10:25 (NCV)** You should not stay away from the church meetings, as some are doing, but you should meet together and encourage each other. Do this even more as you see the day coming.

  - 1). Some try to say the Bible never says a believer needs to be in church – really!
  - 2). The NT is a church saturated book
    - a). It assumes you will be in church – it's discipline is to remove you from church
    - b). It's letters are written to churches
    - c). Jesus went to the synagogue – the church of his day
    - d). In Revelation 1 Jesus is standing in the midst of the churches
    - e). He dictates 7 letters all to churches
    - f). The Apostle Paul writes three letters specifically to show how people should conduct themselves in churches
  - 3). Say YES to church – commit yourself – don't leave that decision up to Sunday morning

**Transition:** One last thing before we close up

### 6. I pray none of you will settle for less than what is being offered

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- A. I was thinking about this in my devotions
- 1). Gen 17 God promises Abraham that Sarah will bear him a son who will be the mother of many nations  
**Listen to Abraham's response: Gen 17:17-18 (NIV)** Abraham fell facedown; he laughed and said to himself, "Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?" (18) And Abraham said to God, ***"If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!"***
    - a). This whole Sarah and a child thing – Lord were tired of trusting – waiting  
We've settled in with Ishmael – just bless him – that is our comfort zone now
  - 2). I think we can get like this in our spiritual walk
    - a). Been apathetic for so long – indifference is habitual
      - 1a). This whole experiencing Christ sounds like a lot of work  
I'm OK where I am – I'm indifferent about being indifferent
    - b). I pray that is none of us here today
      - 1a). Let's determine to experience all God has for us
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## CONCLUSION

### 1. God offers us in the Bible the most incredible life

- A. It may not have all the things the world things life is comprised of
- 1). It is not promising comfort and ease – health and wealth  
The promise is a life filled with Him – his touch – his love – his fulness
    - a). All the things Paul writes about in Ephesians 3