

**Extraordinary Living: Lesson in Faith from Ordinary People**  
**“Obedience despite fear”**  
**Part 2**

**Intro:** I hate being afraid. One of the reasons for this is fear can make you feel not in control. Something else is controlling you. Share Bear Story – Elk hunting and calling in a bear with a calf call.

There are times God is going to ask us to do something extraordinary and it is going to create fear in us. In these moments, we must let obedience win not fear. There was a guy in the bible named Gideon. He had to overcome his fear in order to trust God with the extraordinary.

Summarize the story of Gideon. Judges 6-8

- Let me explain 3 essential truths from this story about obedience in the face of fear.

**1. God sees us as we can be not as we are**

Notice how God saw Gideon as he was hiding in a wine press.

*Judges 6:12 “The angel of the LORD appeared to him and said, “Mighty hero, the LORD is with you!” (NLT) “You talking to me?”*

God saw Gideon as who he could become not what he was. God looks at you in the same manner.

- You are more than you think you are  
You see your limitations. You feel trapped in your current circumstances. You feel powerless. You see your faults, flaws and insecurities. You see the impossibilities of your situation and circumstances. God sees a hero of faith in the making.
  - We have allowed this world and our current condition we find ourselves in to define who we are. Even Gideon defined himself as the youngest in the family and part of the most insignificant tribe in Israel. “I’m a nobody.”
  - We doubt what God says just like Gideon. The NT is filled with statements of who we are yet we struggle fully believing them.
  - **Share statements –Put on screens** - I am statements. I call these the “Deadly Dozen”. Why? Because these truths make us deadly to our enemy. 12 truths about you that make you a weapon of righteousness for the Kingdom of God! (Card printed in bulletin)
  - Jesus sees who you really are. Jesus sees what you can become.
  - There is a scene from the Lion King movie I love – share – “Simba, you are more than what you have become.”
  
- You are capable of doing more than you think you can

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Now I realize what God asked Gideon to do would create fear in anyone. God is asking Gideon to defend his homeland from an army who has been ravaging the land for the past 7 years.

- The reason he was capable of doing something no one had done before was it was God who was asking him to do it. Obedience would allow Gideon to experience the extraordinary.
- Obedience increases our potential exponentially. This is why you are capable of doing more than you can imagine. It's not you or your abilities. Obedience taps into the power of God.
- Unfortunately, we have more faith in our limitations than the power of God. We see circumstances and challenges from the perspective of our resources rather than the unlimited resources of God.

*Eph. 3:16 "I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit." (NLT)*

*Eph. 3:20 "Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think." (NLT)*

- God sees you through this perspective. He sees what you can be with Him.

## **2. God works with us despite our fear**

Notice Gideon's fear throughout the story

- Threshing the wheat in a wine press (pit dug into the ground)
- Tears down the idols at night
- He lays out a fleece for 2 nights
- He sneaks down into the enemy camp to over hear a dream

*Judges 7:9-11 "...Go down into the Midianite camp, for I have given you victory over them!<sup>10</sup> But if you are afraid to attack, go down to the camp with your servant Purah.<sup>11</sup> Listen to what the Midianites are saying, and you will be greatly encouraged. Then you will be eager to attack." (NLT)*

I love the fact that God didn't reject Gideon because of his fear. God didn't get angry at Him...God didn't criticize him because he was afraid. Instead, God worked with Gideon despite his fear. I love how God grew his courage throughout the story. God does the same with us.

- God will often give us indicators of His will to grow our courage
  - Stories of starting Foothills (Unity with the Pastors / Favor with the school / First Easter 80+ people and 7 people gave their lives to Jesus. / This building lease went from \$14K to \$5K)
  - What indicators has God been putting in your path that He is leading you forward despite your fear? Stop looking at things as coincidence and start seeing things as the hand of God leading you forward.

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- How do we recognize God's indicators?
  - Be walking in obedience – Gideon was walking forward in obedience doing what God asked him to do. Part of the blessing of walking in obedience is having God lead your life. If you refuse to walk in obedience, don't expect to see indicators.
  - Be Prayerful. Gideon was in constant communication with God throughout the story. Are we asking / pleading / searching? James 1 tells us if we lack wisdom let us ask. Are we?
  - Be aware. Are we even looking for God's indicators? How often do we pray for direction and then not even look for the ways God is leading us? Too often we want God to answer the big question. More often though, what God does is give you just enough to follow Him. He gives us just enough to take one more step. BUT, because God didn't answer the big question, we ignore his indicators.
    - This is how God has lead this church. We just look for the indicators of Jesus' involvement and chase after that! (explain)

### 3. **Even fearful obedience results in the extraordinary**

Gideon had fearful obedience. God asks Gideon to attempt what was militarily impossible: 300 vs 135,000. From the human realm this was a suicide mission. It would be normal to be afraid. From the realm of the Kingdom of God, it wasn't even close. It wasn't even a fight. It was a total rout. Gideon obeyed despite his ongoing struggle with fear.

- When we obey despite our fear, we experience the extraordinary
  - Experiencing fear does not mean we have a lack of faith. It doesn't mean we don't trust God. Fear is not an indicator we are lousy followers of Jesus.
  - Fear is our natural human response to the unknown. When we have never done something before, there is usually a bit of anxiety that goes along with new experiences.
  - Following Jesus is an exercise in walking in to the unknown. Jesus is always leading us in to new territory. Jesus is constantly growing our faith and trust in Him. HOW? By leading us to be and do more than we've ever done before. This naturally creates some fear.
  - **For example:** God gave us this building so we could expand ministries and increase our influence for the Kingdom of God. It's one of the reasons we purchased this building. BUT, purchasing and remodeling the former True Value space is not the end. It was just a growth step / a trust step
    - We still have the rest of the building to transform. Explain relational space / flooring / outside of the building / parking lots /
    - We've already raised over \$1 million to purchase the building. Why would God ask us to trust Him to do the same thing? No, He will ask us to trust Him with something we question if it's possible or not.

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- We will probably need at least \$3 million to finish the site plan. Impossible you say. Precisely! Don't you want to see the miraculous? The only way we see the miraculous is following Jesus into the impossible. Obedience despite fear is what leads us to the extraordinary.
- We will never know who we can become and what we can do unless we follow Jesus despite our fears.

- I am tired of hearing people say things such as; “Where is the power of God today?” “Why doesn't God do miracles like He did in the bible?” Gideon said the same thing.

*Judges 6:13 “Gideon replied, “if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us? And where are all the miracles our ancestors told us about?...” (NLT)*

- The problem is not with God. The problem is with us. The reason we do not see the miraculous and experience God doing the extraordinary is because the people of God refuse to attempt the impossible. We only see the extraordinary when we trust Jesus for the extraordinary.
  - This requires us to follow Jesus into the unknown, obeying Him despite our fears, anxieties and doubts. He blesses fearful obedience. “Lord, I'm terrified right now but I will follow you.”
  - It is this type of faith that unleashes the power of God to do the miraculous!
  - Isn't this what your heart longs for? I know mine does. I do not want more religious stuff. I want to be a church that defies the odds and is unexplainable.
  - We are on the threshold of tremendous change as a church. Jesus is leading us forward. New building space / expanded ministries / new opportunities / greater influence in our community
  - This will require many of you to trust Jesus and move past your fears like never before. We are going to need a host of new people helping us in ministries. We are going to need people who are willing to be trained to do things they never thought possible.
  - God has an extraordinary future for you and this church...BUT, we must follow Him beyond our fears. How is Jesus calling you to follow Him despite the anxiety you feel?

What fear is keeping you from following Jesus fully? What fear is keeping you from the extraordinary life you were created for? Are you ready to have Jesus be the greatest influence on your life rather than your fear?

How is Jesus asking you to trust Him despite your fear today? Will you surrender your fear to Jesus today? We either surrender our fear to Jesus or fear will keep us from surrender.

Prayer time

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