

God Is With You

by Lewis Gregory

God's presence and provision are available to us in the midst of difficulties, and He desires a direct and personal relationship with us.

Duration: 39:12

Scripture: Genesis 6:8, Exodus 20:1-17, Judges 6:17, Matthew 6:33, John 1:14, Romans 3:23-24, Ephesians 2:8-9

Topics: "Isolated"

Description

In this sermon on Judges chapter 6 verse 17, the preacher discusses the historical context of the book of Judges, where the people of Israel were in need of a leader to rescue them from occupation by other nations. The focus is on Gideon, who finds himself in a difficult place and questions whether he has found grace in God's sight. The preacher emphasizes that Gideon's doubts and questions are relatable to those who feel obscure, isolated, and abandoned. The sermon highlights Gideon's dialogue with the angel of the Lord, where he questions why all the difficulties have befallen them and expresses a sense of God forsaking them.

Transcript

Judges chapter 6 and verse 17. Judges was a time in the history of the people of Israel when they needed help and they needed a leader. They needed a champion, someone to rescue them because they would fall under occupation of different other countries.

Anyway, it was a difficult time and here we see an example of it. Judges chapter 6 verse 17 and it's about Gideon. And so Gideon said unto the Lord, If I now have found grace in your sight, then show me a sign that you have talked with me.

If I have now found grace in your sight. Okay, let's pray together. Lord, You are a God of grace.

Grace is available. And You're the one that extends grace to us. And yes, Lord, we have found grace in Your sight.

And so I pray, Lord, this day that what we have found in Your sight we would find in our heart and in our life. In Christ's name, Amen. You know, people often look at the Bible and they say, Well, the Old Testament is the law and the New Testament is grace.

But what they don't realize is the Bible is about God and God is about grace. God is a God of grace. In the beginning, God.

In the beginning, God what? God created. And so from that point forward, everything we see is God doing for us, God providing for us, God making available to us. And yes, even the gift of the law was grace because He made us aware of what He wanted us to know and what He wanted us to do.

More importantly, what He wanted us to be. And then, of course, He made available to us grace in its fullest and most beautiful form through the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. But this phrase often used in the Old Testament and seen first in the book of Genesis regarding Noah, where it says there that Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

That's Genesis chapter 6 verse 8. Noah found grace. Grace is available where God is sought and where God extends Himself, where God makes Himself known because grace comes from God. Grace is God's provision.

The simple, most basic definition of grace has to do with God's unmerited favor. And that's most evident, especially in the early stages of God making Himself known through His grace. Because clearly, there's no merit on our part that could ever warrant God's grace.

And so, He extends favor, that is, His goodness, His mercy, His kindness, His care, His provision, His protection, and on and on it goes. This is grace. God at work.

So now, we look here at this verse, and let's look back at it again. Judges 6.17 If now I have found grace in your sight. Joshua was the leader of the people.

And he led his people in a triumphant way. But he came and went. And when he left, everything began to fall apart.

And from that point forward, it was up and down and up and down. And so, when Gideon comes on the scene in his life, he finds himself in a very difficult place. And so, it's hard for him to comprehend that he could have found grace in God's sight.

It's hard for him to comprehend. That's why he wants God to show him a sign. But before we go to how God shows him a sign, let's understand what's going on in Gideon's life.

So, let's back up just a few verses there in the book of Judges 6. And there in verse 12. And the angel of the Lord appeared unto Gideon. The angel of the Lord appeared unto Gideon.

He had come to him in verse 11. And now, it tells us specifically that in coming to him, he appeared to him. That is, God wants to make himself known to us.

That's one of the first most basic aspects of God's grace. God cares about you individually, as a person. God wants you.

God is concerned about you. God has your best interest at heart. And at some point in time, God will come to you.

God will make himself known to you. And that's what we see is happening here. So, Gideon now has an encounter with the Lord.

The word angel has to do with messenger. And God sends messengers in different forms. He has angelic beings, and they come, and they appear in various ways to communicate to us, and to speak to us, so that we see and know and hear God.

And so, this angel, this messenger of the Lord, appeared to Gideon. He appeared, and that tells us that some way, somehow, Gideon saw him, and knew him, and was able to hear him. And so, Gideon is there, and the angel appears, and the angel speaks.

And said unto Gideon. We're in verse 12 still. And this is what he said.

The Lord is with you. And we can say, Gideon, because that's who he's talking to. The Lord is with you, Gideon, you mighty man of valor.

Now, we can stop there, and say, okay, that sounds pretty good. God came to this great man, this obviously great man of courage, and he must be a very significant person, and so naturally God would come to him. But what about me? I don't feel like I've had any great achievements or accomplishments, at least certainly not compared to others.

And what about me? I seem to be kind of obscure, and isolated, and left out, and ignored, and even feel at times abandoned. And yet, let's look at Gideon and see what he's really telling us about this guy. Who is this guy, Gideon? Verse 13, Gideon said unto the angel of the Lord, in reality talking to the Lord.

He says, O my Lord, if the Lord be with us. And notice that word, if, comes up a number of times here, and for good reason. So we're going to find out why he keeps saying if.

If the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? And, furthermore he goes on to say, and where are all of the Lord's miracles, which our fathers told us of, saying, did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt? And on and on and on, they told him all these miracles of what God did. But now he says, but now the Lord has forsaken us. And he's delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.

That is to say, the hands of the enemy. So he's saying, we're in a bad way here. We're in a difficult situation.

And so that's why we notice there, he says, why is all this befallen us? Well, the all this, we have to understand what the all this is about. What's going on here that would be so disturbing and unsettling to this guy, that would cause him to question or doubt the fact that the angel of the Lord has just said, the Lord is with you. Why would he doubt the credibility of God, or God's messenger? Why would he even, in fact, be concerned about it? But he says in that verse, the Lord has delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.

Okay, well, what about the Midianites? Well, they were one of their enemies. They were one of the opposing countries. They were a very powerful country.

They had a lot of people, a lot of soldiers. And they did not like the neighboring countries. And so Israel, the country of Israel, became a target and a victim.

And they were attacked and overcome. In fact, in the earlier verses here, it tells us something about Midian. In Judges chapter 6, earlier in there, it says that the Midianites were such a threat to Israel, that they came and took them over in verse 2. They prevailed against Israel.

And they were such a dominant force and such a destructive force, that the Israelites were then running scared. And it said they had to live in dens and caves and in other safe places called strongholds. They went anywhere they could get where they felt safe and secure to hide out and to avoid being used or abused by this conquering country, this conquering force.

Then it goes on to say, in verse 3, it says, And so it was when Israel had sown. Now that's talking about farming. They sowed seed.

They planted their crops. Everything was going good. All their animals and everything looked great and as it could be and should be.

And then it says, the Midianites came up. So here they are. Basically, understand, they are a slave people.

They're subject to a foreign power. They're subject to a tyrant king and to a domineering, overbearing people that have come in to just take advantage of them. So then at that point it says, they had sown their crops.

They had these, everything was going great. Their farms were looking good. Everything was going good.

And now the Midianites come and with them the Amalekites. And it says, and others. And they all came up against the Israelites.

So, what are they coming for? Well, it says in verse 4, they encamped against them and they destroyed the increase of the earth. And it says, Do you come unto Gaza? And they left no sustenance for Israel. In other words, they came and they just pillaged the land.

It says, neither sheep nor ox nor ass. All these animals were taken away. They just came and they just stripped the land.

So here they are. And this is how it is in life. There are always those who want to have dominion over you.

There are always those who want to be dictators of you. There are always those who want to come. And they come by way of that thief who comes to steal, kill and destroy.

Because in fact of the matter, that old serpent, the devil, is the destroyer of mankind. And he's constantly creating division and strife among us. And he's always creating power struggles.

Whether it be racial, the battle of the sexes, whatever it might be. He's always trying to create some sort of sense of division so that somebody dominates someone else. Males want to dominate females.

Females want to dominate males. Whites dominate blacks. Blacks dominate Hispanics.

Everybody wants to dominate somebody. We're always wanting to overpower somebody and have the upper hand. Why? So we can get all the stuff.

Because there's this drive for greed. There's this drive for wanting to be in control. And to tell other people what to do.

Well at any rate, that's what's happening. Now that's the picture. Okay? So, Israel is impoverished, verse 6. And Israel was greatly impoverished.

Not just impoverished, greatly impoverished. Do you know that currently the United States of America charges the highest tax against corporations of any country in the world? 39%. The highest tax of any country in the world.

And reports are the government wants more. You see, it goes on that way. No matter what we've got, those in power, those in control, want more and more and more.

And see, that's why the Midianites, they were not content just to have another country under their dominion. They were not content to have just another country as some of their slaves. They wanted everything those people had.

And when the time was right, when the people had prospered, what happened? They came and took their belongings. They took their possessions. So, this is a pattern throughout history.

And it's not just to one isolated group of people. It happens everywhere all the time. And it was most evident here during the history of the people of Israel.

Because you see, God shows us patterns of how things work so that we today can understand. The scripture says those things that happened to the earlier ones happened for our benefit so that as it was recorded and reported, we could learn from them. We could benefit from their mistakes and we could see how to cooperate with God.

That's why when we hear the story, the little statement, history repeats itself, we realize, well, yeah, but why? Doesn't have to. Shouldn't. If we'd learn our lesson.

The reason history repeats itself is because we as humans don't learn our lessons. And so, the Israelites are now in a bad way. They have been greatly impoverished.

And so, in this point of desperation, in this time of dire conditions, what happened? They turned back to God. They cried out to God. And this is always God's way.

If we will call upon Him, He'll meet us at the point of our need and He'll respond to us and He'll reach out to us. That's called grace. Finding favor in the sight of the Lord.

So, they called upon the Lord and He sent a prophet. Now, the prophet is another form of God's messenger. It's a spokesperson.

And the prophet basically said, hey, I did right by you. That is, he's speaking on God's behalf. God did right by you.

And God took care of you. And look what you did. You fell away from God.

You turned away from God. You got caught up in your own selfish things and your own selfish ways. And you lost sight of God.

And then, in fact, you let other things become your gods. You let other things become your life. You looked at those things and they were more to you than God was.

In fact, you even forgot about God so that He didn't even count anymore. But other things became your idol. That is, you were driven to have those things.

You were driven by those things. You were consumed with those things. So, God's trying to say there, in verse 10, You have not obeyed My voice.

He says, it's very simple. I told you the plan. I explained to you how to live.

But you went off and did your own thing your own way. And thus, you fell into problems. Sin.

Destruction. Death. Devastation.

So, in the midst of this crying out to God, He gives them direction and instruction. And then, He raises up a champion. And that's where Gideon comes in.

So, that's why we see here that the angel of the Lord now comes to appear to Gideon. Because Gideon is going to be God's leader to bring these people out of this time of oppression, out of this time of slavery and bondage, to a new place of peace and order, of liberty, of freedom. But, first God has to deal with Gideon.

And that's where He is with you and I. We may not be a person that's going to lead some group of people somewhere. We may not be a person who would rescue others from their problems. But we can be a person unto the Lord.

We can be all that God wants us to be. And whatever that means, well, hey, that's His department. That's His responsibility.

But we can be available to Him. We can entrust our lives to Him. So, first of all, we have to see, well, what does that mean to us? Who is God to you? You see, this is the real question we're going to discover about Gideon's life.

Who am I, and who is God to me? Who am I, and what does God have to say about my life? Who am I, and what does God care about me? Who am I, and because of God, what difference does that make in my life? And let's look at what He tells us here. Let's look again. And let's go a little further through the struggle of what Gideon's working through all this.

So, we're now skipping down to where we left off a moment ago. Verse 14. Now, God's going to answer Gideon on these concerns he has.

God's going to respond. So, in verse 14, And the Lord looked upon Gideon, and the Lord said, Go in this thy might. Hey, wait a minute.

No answer there. No explanation to all these questions that Gideon had just asked. Remember, if the Lord is with us, why? If the Lord is with us, why do you explain all these problems we're having? If the Lord is really with us, He's saying, where are all His miracles? If the Lord is with us, then why did He forsake us? If the Lord is with us, then what about the Midianites? Where is God in all this? Where is God in all this? And the Lord's answer.

Verse 14. And the Lord looked at Gideon and said, Go in this your might. You see, sometimes God realizes that the questions we're asking aren't the questions we should ask.

In fact, they're not relevant to what God's purpose and plan for our life is. And furthermore, they're the very thing that keeps us from being all that God wants us to be and doing all that God wants us to do. So, God bypasses that to get us to focus not on the negatives, but on the positive.

You see, as soon as something comes up in our lives, as soon as somebody has something for us, maybe the boss has a job for you at work, maybe a problem arises in your home with your children, or some particular item of yours in your house, some property or something gets damaged, then what happens? We start asking, oh, why did God let this happen to me? Or, well, how in the world am I going to handle this? Or, what am I going to do about that? Or, I don't know, how am I going to fix this? And we start moaning and groaning about all the reasons why things can't work out and all the reasons why we're not going to be able to get the job done. And all God wants us to do is go back and say, wait a minute, where am I in all this? Look at me in the midst of all of this. Acknowledge me in all your ways and I will what? I'll direct your paths.

Your privilege is to just acknowledge me. Stop acknowledging the enemies in your life. Stop acknowledging the problems in your life.

Stop acknowledging the pain in your life. Stop acknowledging all these negatives about your life or all the reasons why you can't and just acknowledge me in all your ways and I will do it. I will do it.

Well, he's going to go into this in more detail. Go in this your might, Gideon, and you will, not maybe, but you will save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. And then he asks him a question.

Have not I sent you? He says, that's all you need to know. I have sent you. I am here.

I have come to you. I am with you. I have sent you.

Therefore, what I say will come to pass. Has he not said and shall he not do it? Yes, he will. If he says it, he will do it.

If God says it, God will do it. So God is speaking very loud and clear here to Midian. He says, look, I have sent you.

I have sent you. All right, let's back up and rethink a couple of things that Gideon had obviously missed the mark on here. And so let's go back to verse 13 where Gideon says, If the Lord be with us.

Now, if is okay. If is okay, we've got to start there. We've got to start with our level of doubt.

Now, there are different kinds of doubts, however. There is the doubt of unbelief based on hardened rebellion or disobedience. And then there is the doubt of uncertainty.

Now, God wants Gideon to be sure and certain. And so he is pushing him in that direction. But he doesn't do it by getting into some kind of debate or discussion with him on the incidentals.

He does it by showing him who God is and who God has made him to be. And thus what he can now do in the Lord. And so to move it fast forward into the new covenant under Christ, you can do all things through Christ.

That's not just some night sweet talk that we keep mentioning around here. It's the reality of what is possible because of who you are in Christ. And more importantly, who he is in you.

So looking now at a couple of things where Gideon had it all. In verse 13. Notice he says, If the Lord be with us.

Well, who is the us? He is talking about the whole nation. All the people of Israel. But what did the Lord say to him through the angel? Verse 13.

And the Lord said to Gideon, The Lord is with who? Us? No, you. The Lord is with you, Gideon. I'm not talking about the us here.

I'm talking about you. The Lord is with you. Now, so that's the first thing we've got to come to grips with.

Sometimes you'll hear people pray. Lord, we ask you for this and we ask you for that. Well, wait a minute.

I may or may not be asking that prayer. You should talk to God direct and personal. Lord, I this or I that.

And there needs to be a direct and personal relationship with the Lord. And so the Lord was dealing with Gideon in a very direct and personal manner. And so he said, He wants you to know.

The Lord wants you to know, the angel says, that he is with you. He is with you. Well, let's look at another issue here in verse 13.

Why has all this befallen us? If you're with us, why has it befallen us? Well, okay, yeah. There were problems. The Midianites did come.

They did conquer. They did overcome. But that was then.

That was then, Gideon. That's past tense. Let bygones be bygones, we say.

Why? Because we can't change the past. But the issue is, what about now? What about here? And God is saying to Gideon, I am here with you now. This is about you, Gideon.

And it's about what I'm doing here and now. In you and on behalf of these people. My people, whom I have committed myself to.

Who have been called by my name, have called upon me. And having called upon me, I am now responding to them. And I am doing so through you, Gideon.

So, yes, the Lord is with Gideon. And yes, he's with him now. Just because negatives have happened in your life, don't rule out the fact that God cares about you, or assume that God has abandoned you.

Just because you can't see him, just because you at the moment don't experience him, does not negate his presence in your life. Once you receive Christ, he comes in to stay. Now, while it's true that sin can occur in our lives, and all too often, unfortunately for some, does, that quenches the spirit.

It robs you of that sense of God's presence, so that you're no longer aware that he's there, and all you see are the negatives. But the negatives are not his fault, it's your fault, for not continuing to trust and obey him. And when those things come, okay, so be it.

Just do like the Israelites had sense enough to do. Turn to the Lord. Cry out to the Lord.

He'll get you through it. He'll show you where you missed the mark, where you went off the track, where you went astray. He'll show you that, so he can pick you up and put you together again.

Because you have found grace in the sight of the Lord. You all have. It's available, but are you receiving the grace that's available to you? And God's trying to get you to just simply believe and receive.

Just believe, Gideon, that you've found grace in my sight. Now just receive from me what I'm saying I am doing in and through you. Just believe and receive.

Just believe and receive. So Gideon now, he's working through it though, and as God speaks, faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. So God is speaking, and Gideon's hearing, but it's a little bit hard for it to register with him, because, see, he's been oblivious to the Lord.

He's been oblivious to God's presence. He's been oblivious to God's power. He's heard about it.

We have this wonderful book, a tremendous record of the great and mighty works of God, and we hear it, and we read it, but sometimes we wonder ourselves, we don't see a whole lot of that nowadays. We don't see much of it in our own lives. It doesn't mean it's not possible.

It doesn't mean he's not available. It doesn't mean he can't or won't do it. It simply means you haven't seen it.

But that was then. But here and now, what about now? We can't do anything about what was, but we certainly can do about what is now, and the way we can do something about it is by looking to him and trusting him just like Gideon is doing here. So, where does that leave us with Gideon? Well, let's see what other things he's a little bit confused about.

Well, he's confused in the sense that God keeps telling him who he is and what God has made him and what God is going to do through him, and all he can see is the other side. So, let's look down a little bit and make sure we are clear about another part of his confusion. Verse 15.

Okay, verse 15. And Gideon said unto the Lord, O my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? You keep coming back to this same old thing with me, Lord. You keep saying you're with me.

You keep saying I'm a mighty man of valor. You keep saying I'm going to save Israel. He says, what? He says, but look at me.

Who am I, he says? Who am I? And that, of course, is the question. Who are you? So, Gideon's question, well, okay, who am I? Wherewith shall I save Israel? Look at me. Who am I? My family is poor.

Okay, I'm poor. Who am I? I am the least in my father's house. Not only am I poor, that is impoverished, lacking the resources.

I'm the least. I'm a nobody. Who am I? He says, well, my gosh, he says, I am poor.

I'm the least. And again the Lord responds. Verse 16.

And the Lord said unto Gideon, Surely I will be with you. See, God gives us assurance when he speaks to us. And he keeps saying the same thing.

I will be with you. Gideon, none of that matters. You keep saying what the enemy has done.

You keep saying what things in the past were all about. Now you're focusing on who you are and on your limited resources and how you're poor and how you are such a nobody, a non-entity, an unknown. But

Gideon, none of that matters.

None of that matters. None of that matters. It's just not relevant.

It's just not relevant. You know, I started out in that kind of mindset. Our family was poor.

I was a nobody. My father's health was bad. In fact, they thought he was going to die.

I had to help support the family from the time I was quite young. I can remember my dad would come and collect whatever change I might have just to help buy milk or some kind of groceries for the family. I was working almost every day from the time I was 12, 13 years old to help support the family.

When I got older, I had to work full time as a teenager to support the family. While my friends were out playing, others were in sports, others were doing who knows what, but I was working, probably kept me out of a lot of trouble, perhaps. But anyway, I was poor.

Our family was poor. I didn't have anything. I didn't see any options or any ways out.

And so, if I would have stayed in that same mindset, had I not met Christ at age 11, had I not realized that He is now in me, and what little I knew of Him, I began to trust Him. And as I began to trust Him, baby steps along the way, God began to move me forward. And I came out from a place of a very poor area, and all of us kids living in the same bedroom, five of us, and with what all we did not have, and what everybody said we could not do, and even my father at times would be so frustrated, he'd say, well, with that attitude you'll never amount to anything.

And of course, that's true. If we have the wrong attitude, we're just going to stay in that rut. But you see, that's where God keeps moving us forward, encouraging us to go on and on and on.

And so God kept pushing me a little farther forward, and a little farther forward, and I would take those baby steps, and I would step into one area and into another, until finally He showed me He had made me a minister. And then He showed me He wanted me to go back to school, which I didn't want to do. But He kept on and kept on and kept on until He opened up a whole new avenue.

And now, by the grace of God, His abundant provision has made it possible, I travel all over the world, and yet I don't have any money to speak of. Somebody was asking me just recently about our retirement. We don't have much of that.

But we have the Lord. We have His safety. We have His security.

We have His care and provision. So we've got to get our eyes off of what we don't have, and we've got to get our eyes off of all of our limitations and all of our inadequacies and all the reasons why we can't, and look at the One who can. The One who can.

And that's why, again, Paul says, I can do all things through Christ. Now, Jesus says, Without me, you cannot. Yes, it's true, you can't without Him.

But here's where God comes into play in Gideon's life. But Gideon, you're no longer without me. You're no longer without me.

And with God, all things are possible. And God is just simply saying to us, Just trust me. Trust me with your life.

Trust me with your problems. Trust me with your needs. But trust me with all of it.

Don't just sort of throw me a few crumbs to meet a few needs here and there. Trust me with your life. And that's what He's trying to get Gideon to do.

He says, Gideon, look at what I've done here. Look at what I've done. Verse 16, Surely, surely, be assured, be certain, I will be with you.

And you will smite the Midianites as one man. He says, now Gideon, there's thousands. But you're one man.

And yet, you're the one. You are the man. We hear people say, man up.

Well, He's saying, man up, Gideon. Stand up and be the man. The man that you can be is the best you can be as the new man in Christ.

Because Christ Jesus is the man. And when He is in us, He enables us to man up. That is, rise up and be all that we can be in the Lord.

To rise up and be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. So the Lord is saying, Gideon, this is the truth. So let's go back.

What is the truth about Gideon? And what is the truth about you? Because it's all the same in the Lord. Okay, in verse 12, He says, Lord is with you. The Lord is with you.

Now again, under the new covenant, Jesus tells us in John 14, I have been with you and now I am coming to be in you. I was with you on the outside and now I'm going to be within you on the inside. So He's saying, I am moving in to take up residence in you.

I want to come into you. I want to take up residence in you. I want to abide in you.

But that is, I want to live and dwell and reside in you. He says, that's what I'm here to do. So the Lord is with you.

If you receive Christ, He is within you. More than that, He says, that makes you. Because the Lord is in you and because the Lord has made you new in Christ, God's grace now makes you a mighty man or woman of valor.

That means courage. So He's made you mighty and He's made you courageous. That is, mighty has to do with your power, your strength, your ability.

And courage has to do with your confidence. So He's saying, look, I am your confidence. I am your courage.

I am your strength. I am your ability. And that's who you are in me.

You are courageous. You are strong. You can do all things through Christ.

So He's saying, that's the real you. And furthermore, He goes on to say that you can go, He says, in this, your might. Not the might you're telling me about of your limitations, but the might that I have instilled in you through my presence and power in your life.

That's your might. That's the awesome strength and the power of the living God. Christ in you.

The strength of your life. And He says, and remember, wherever you go, I go with you. As I lead you, I send you, I guide you, I provide for you.

He says, have not I sent you. So you need to focus on the certainty of who God says you are in Him. And yes, He'll show us signs.

He does encourage us. But He wants us to go beyond always needing a sign. Signs are the preliminary stages that He uses to build our faith.

But at some point, we've got to move on beyond having to have another sign, another, some kind of proof or evidence. We've got to just start trusting God in our heart and exercising faith to step out boldly as He leads. But most definitely in this case, He gave Him a sign.

And He happened to consume the flesh that He put out there on that rock with the fire. God created the fire. He brought forth the fire.

That's evidence of God's power, His presence. And then it says in verse 22, And Gideon perceived, that is, he came to see and know and understand, that he was speaking with the angel of the Lord. And finally, Gideon says, Alas, O Lord God.

Up to that time, he had referred to Him as Lord, but he really wasn't sure who he was talking to or what was going on. But suddenly, he knew. There is a time of perception that says, I have heard you with the hearing in my ear, but now I know you.

Because my eye has seen you and I know I see God. I know God is in me through Christ. I know God is for me because of Christ.

I know God is available to me because of Christ. There comes a knowing and a certainty that even as God said there, Surely I am with you. And you've got to just agree with God in spite of all the circumstances of the contrary and say, Surely God is with me.

Surely I am a mighty man or woman of courage. Surely I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Yes, I can.

Let's pray together. So, Lord, Gideon is a wonderful story. It's a wonderful picture.

Thank you, Lord, for all the many examples throughout the Bible and these stories from the Old Testament of people discovering you, learning about you, discovering who you have made them to be, and discovering all that you are enabling them to do. And, Lord, we thank you that through Jesus Christ, all of us have that same privilege, not just a select or isolated few as cropped up over history past, but now through Christ you're available to all of us equally. And so, Lord, we thank you for that honor and that privilege, Lord Jesus.

We acknowledge you as Lord and Savior. We acknowledge that as sinners we need a Savior. We thank you for the cross, for your death on that cross for our sins.

I receive, Lord, the gift of forgiveness. Thank you, Lord, for the privilege of being able to just receive by faith and receive Christ as our Lord, our life, our all. But most of all, Lord, I thank you for your life in me and your presence and power that will never leave me nor forsake me.

And I thank you, Lord, that it's Gideon that you have made us, each and every one of us in Christ, mighty men and women of valor, strong in the Lord and courageous in the Lord so that we can be strong and of good courage, not afraid or dismayed, but knowing, Lord, that you're with us wherever we go. We thank you and praise you for that, Lord. And, Father, give us grace to see through the stuff, the negatives, the problems, the obstacles, all the other people that would say we can't.

And just see and know that in Christ we can. Yes, in Christ I can do all things because you strengthen me and you are the strength of my life. In Jesus' name, amen.

Amen.

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