



MEN AND THEIR FEAR

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All right, gentlemen, we ready to go? You guys ready to go? Welcome to Real Men. Hey, who's the new guys? Raise your hand. We are so honored to have you. Could we welcome all the new guys? Honor their presidents. We're very honored to have you. And, uh, we're just, uh, we're just excited to be together. And if you're new, you made a really great decision to be in the best place with the best guys. And I'm telling you, God's gonna honor your decision to be with us. And thanks to everyone who's joining us online as well. Uh, today we're gonna start a study in a guy in the Bible named Gideon Judges, uh, six, seven, and eight. If you wanna start reading ahead, and before I jump in, there is a free study guide. Where are my nerd friends? You guys like footnotes. Other guys are like, I already graduated. Why do I gotta read? Uh, but it, it's good to read. And so I've got a study guide for you. You can grab a free copy if you're here at Trinity on the way out. If you scan the QR code, I'll send you a free digital copy, everything we cover in there. And if you want to go deeper, I want to help you go deeper in God's word we're gonna deal with in our time together. Over the course of a few weeks, we're gonna look at a guy in the Old Testament named Gideon. And, uh, he's a warrior. He leads, uh, an army into battle. He conquers an enemy, but he didn't start there. He started with a bit of fear and a bit of cowardice and a bit of retreat in isolation. And lemme just say this, every man has his limits. I don't care how tough you are at some point in life, you're just gonna reach that point where it breaks you. And I'll be honest with you guys, I like strength, not weakness. How many of you, if you've got pick between strength and weakness? I'd go strength. I made it through most of my life in strike. My, my grandpa was a diesel mechanic. My dad was a union drywaller, one of my first jobs. I was a longshoreman. I grew up in a bit of a rough neighborhood, green River Killer Tim Bundy. I was the oldest of five kids. And so I was literally fighting quite a bit just to survive. I just learned to grind. I have a high pain tolerance. I can work hard, I can take a punch. I didn't mind combat sports. And I just feel like if the toughest guy wins, 'cause he is the last man standing, that's probably going to be me. And then I hit my limit. And for me, that was a very unfamiliar place. I'll tell you guys the story. Um, so I was going to put some, I remember it was a jacket or a shirt, and the button fell off and I started crying. I'll be honest. Usually I can handle a button, you know, us. But how many, it wasn't the button, but what it was, the button was just the last thing. And I couldn't take anymore. So literally, I remember sitting there, I was in my forties, this was almost 10 years ago, and I'm sitting there crying and I'm just thinking to myself, okay, I'm not doing so good. Because apparently the button is more than I can handle, right? And what had happened was just prior, um, I just sort of grind through life. And then ultimately life just imploded. All of a sudden I had a job and I quit and I'm unemployed. And it was unexpected. All of a sudden had a platform. Now I'm canceled. Now I'm trying to figure out, okay, where are we gonna live? 'cause I got five kids, elementary, middle, high school, college. Like, where are we gonna go? I didn't know what country or state, am I ever gonna get a decent job? Am I gonna be a pastor again? Uh, in addition, um, we, um, we're trying to figure out every aspect of our life. We lost friends, lost reputation, lost job. Wife is anxious, kids are anxious. It felt like an avalanche. Life felt like an avalanche. And all of a sudden I didn't have a shovel. Like, I don't know where to start. I don't know how to dig out from this. I'm completely overwhelmed. And for the first time in a really significant, deep and profound way, I felt very, very fearful. I felt like, oh my gosh. Like, I feel like it's over. Like, I could lose my wife. I could lose my kids. I don't know what to do for a job. Our safety was threatened. Media was all over us, canceled everything I was hoping wouldn't happen, happened all at once. And I was trying to process all of this and just kind of be tough and grind through it, and just fight my way to the other side. And then I reached my limit as a man, as I go, apparently this is my current pain threshold. I've hit it. And I had a lot of fear and I had a lot of anxiety. And in that moment, a button broke me. That's just where I was. And I'll be honest with you guys, I don't like talking about this. I like strong, not weak, right? I like Rambo films, not lifetime movies. You know, I don't, I don't. But how many of us, if we're men, you know, that you reach a point where you're sort of at the end of your humanity and it feels like life is breaking you and just being tough and fighting through it and grinding through it isn't going to fix it, okay? And what happens in those moments is we get overwhelmed with fear and men don't like to talk about this, but this is what we're gonna talk about. And in that moment, I had a lot of anxiety and fear. I started to get a nervous eye twitch. I started getting hand tremors. I was like, what in the world? I was driving my car depth perception off just 'cause of stress and fear and anxiety. And I started running all

these doom loops in my head of like, okay, what if my wife doesn't wanna move to another state? Or what if my kids hate God in the church 'cause of what we're going through? Or what, what if my life is over? What if we're bankrupt? Or what if I lose everything? Overwhelming? So I wanna talk a little bit about fear, but I, I wanna talk about the fact that every man has fear. And as men, we have to know what to do with the fear. And some of you guys, I know you alphas. I mean, you guys are like, I don't have any fear. You're, you're afraid of being honest. Um, okay, you're lying. So, um, here's some questions for you. And I want this to be for you because you matter. Your life matters. Your marriage matters, your kids matter. Your job matters. Your company matters. Your grandkids matter. And we're here because you matter. Uh, what keeps you, uh, up at night? Anything as you're going to bed, it's, you're like, I'm thinking about that. I'm worried about that. I'm sort of burdened for that. Um, what do you get concerned or nervous about? Where does the anxiety arise When you get up in the morning? What's the first thing that's in your mind? You're like, oh, I gotta, I gotta deal with that today. Or I don't want to deal with that today. Or I need to deal with them today, but I don't want to deal with them today. In addition, what causes you to be irritable and moody? When something causes you to change your personality, it's probably someone or something that you have some fear and anxiety around. For many of us men, let's just be honest, as men, what are some of the things that, that are just kind of fear and anxiety that we just kind of carry as men? We don't talk about it, but we carry it. Money. Money. And, and, and the truth is like inflation goes up and costs go up and you get married and you have kids. And as a provider and head of household, how many of you men, there's a little burden that comes with that provision. Like, I have kids and they don't generate revenue. Uh, you know, and they just keep eating. Uh, so I've gotta figure this out. Other burdens that men carry. Vocational goes with the financial, am I gonna get a good job? Is it gonna be a career job? How's my performance review gonna go? Uh, what is my income going to be? Is there upward mobility? As my family grows? Am I going to be able to go up the ladder to generate more revenue to provide for the wife and the kids? And oftentimes too, for us as men, one of the things that causes us just sort of fear, anxiety, burden is physical. You get sick, you get injured, you get diagnosed, something happens. You're not strong. When those times happen as men, you're like, man, usually I just sort of push my way through it. But if my body's not capable, that becomes a difficult circumstance for a man. Here's another question. Not only what do you fear, but who do you fear? Who do you fear? And most of us don't like to talk about the fact that there are people that we fear. And Proverbs 29 25 says that fear of man is a trapper, a snare. Who is it that you avoid? You're like, I don't want to deal with them. I don't want to talk to them. I don't wanna see them. How many people, when they push you around, you sort of take it? Or if they demand something of you, you surrender to it. Or if they are sort of overtaking their jurisdiction in your life, you tolerate it. Uh, who, when they're out of line, you don't really say anything in addition. Um, here's gonna be my, uh, my diagnostic question for us as men, what are you self-medicating for? As men, we know we have fear and anxiety. And what it causes is if we don't know how to process it and deal with it, we self-medicate. This is why guys drink to try and calm down. This is why guys go to drugs to avoid dealing with it. This is why guys go to pornography because it provides some recalibrating of the body and some comfort in the dopamine head. This is why some guys, um, they become very anxious and angry and agitated 'cause they don't like feeling overwhelmed. So they wanna feel powerful. So they overreact with anger. If you had an angry dad, here's what I'm telling you, he was probably a fearful and depressed person and he was overcompensating with his anger 'cause he didn't like the way that it made him feel when he didn't feel like he was strong and in charge. And here's what happens. When you have fear in the mind, it causes anxiety in the body. So your body tells you what your mind is thinking. And there are three ways to know when your anxiety or your fear or your stress is rising, spinning, mind racing, heart churning, gut spinning. Mind you, it's, you just keep thinking about something and it's an open loop and you're trying to figure out how to problem solve or what's gonna happen. And it's something that you're thinking about when you're supposed to be listening to your wife or kids, but you're distracted. Or you're supposed to be going to sleep, but you can't go to sleep 'cause you're thinking about it. Or you go to sleep and then you wake up in the middle of the night and now you're thinking about it, spending mind, racing, heart. Some of you guys, when when it comes, you literally can feel your blood pressure increasing. Your body is getting into a fight or flight response and churning gut. Some guys get

stomach aches, some guys just feel a little nauseous, a little sick. They're not doing so well. And let me say this, there are two kinds of men. There are not men who have fear and men who don't have fear. There are men who get through their fear and there are men who don't get through their fear. Every man is going to have between where he is and the destiny that God has for him. Some obstacle that'll cause him fear. And the truth is, every man has someone or something that is fearful for him. And some men fight through that. Other men surrender to it. Let me tell you a story. Let lemme ask you this. Just be honest. You guys are quiet. You're looking at me like, yeah, there's a friend of mine who really needs to hear this. I'm talking to you, okay? Um, and I know you don't have any friends, so, so, so lemme ask you this. When I just as a man, as an honest man, when I say the word fear, what's the first word that you think of? Fight. Lost. Lost failure. Weak, Weak, Democrat. Okay, lo how about this? Jesus. Jesus. Did Jesus ever have a moment where he just kind of reached the limits of his humanity? And what he was having to deal with was overwhelming for him and it caused him physical distress and anxiety? Yeah. So if you wanna be godly, you wanna be like Jesus. And if Jesus had fear and anxiety, you're gonna have fear and anxiety. The moment that Jesus demonstrates the most fear and anxiety, and what this means is that fear and anxiety can't be a sin. 'cause Jesus had it. Now, he didn't surrender to it. He got through it. We're gonna talk about that. But do you remember the story before he was crucified? It's night. Is he sleeping or awake? He is wide awake all night. Okay? Why? Because what he is facing is overwhelming as a man. Now he is God, become a man. But here he is, reached the limits of his humanity. I'm gonna go to the cross and I'm gonna endure the wrath of God and atone for the sin of the world. So he is up all night, he can't sleep. What is he doing? He's praying. What is he praying? Father, if there's another way, let's do that. How many of you guys have prayed that prayer? Hey, Lord, uh, if there's any plan BI vote yes. I don't want the divorce. I don't want cancer. I don't wanna lose my job. I don't want my company to fail. Uh, I don't want my kid to be apostate. If there's a plan B, I'll take it. Okay? And what are the signs that his body is giving him that he's not doing so well? He, he's sweating like drops of blood. Hema hydros, I think is what they call it. It's when the body is under such stress that it starts to leak blood out of the capillaries, right? So here's Jesus. And he is, he is overwhelmed. And as he is looking what is before him, it's overwhelming for him. Here's what I'm telling you guys. You're not tougher than Jesus, okay? And if you find yourself in the moment that Jesus was, it doesn't mean you're weak because he wasn't weak. It means you're human. And so as Jesus goes through his fear, and he, he ultimately surrenders and he says, father, your will be done. He surrenders to it and he goes through it. Okay? Now, Jesus as a man is such a gift to us as men. 'cause as we look to Jesus, we're like, okay, that's what a man looks like. In addition, if Jesus went through it, then he can go with us as we go through it. And that brings me to the story of Gideon. 'cause Gideon is a guy who's having that day. He's not doing well. He's overwhelmed. His life is cratered. He has a lot of anxiety and fear and burden. He doesn't know what to do. So he's withdrawing and he's hiding. But here's what you're gonna see. Jesus comes down and helps him, okay? And I want you to know that Jesus can come down and help you in some form or fashion. Um, most of us, when we think of the story of Gideon, if you know it, we'll read chapter six in a moment. Most of us think of Gideon as a what? A warrior who's courageous. But he started as a coward. He didn't start as a strong man. He started as a scared man. Now, some of you guys are alphas and foot forward. We're glad to have you. But some of you guys, you, you're, you're gonna be a little more shy, a little more timid. Or maybe you started as a strong man and life has just kicked your teeth down your throat. Like circumstances have just kind of beat you. They've broken you, they've battered you, and you're like, I, I love the Lord. And I'm, I'm up for the fight. I just don't have any fight left in me. Here. Here's the story of Gideon. We'll read it and then, and then I'll unpack it, but we'll read it together. The people of Israel that did what was evil in the side of the Lord. So the whole nation and cultures corrupt just like ours. And the Lord gave them into the hand of Midians, seven years. So they had an impress, oppressive, invading force. And uh, their nation was overtaken for seven years by their enemies. The people made for themselves, the dens that are in the mountains, they're literally hiding for their lives. And the caves in the stronghold, they've fled their homes and they're hiding in the mountains. They're not even putting up a fight anymore. The fight is over for whenever the Israelites planted crops, the Midianites and the Amalekites and the people of the East would devour the produce of the land. They'd destroy all their food and leave no sustenance in Israel. And

no sheep or rocks or donkey. You're dealing with worse than the great depression level of starvation. And Israel was brought very low, just emotionally, spiritually, financially, physically completely defeated, completely discouraged, completely distraught. And then finally, here's where everything changes. The people of Israel cried out for help to the Lord. So when you're in it, you gotta stop and you gotta cry out to the Lord. Now the angel of the Lord, that's Jesus Christ. I've said this before, angel means messenger. When it says an angel of the Lord, it's a created being an angel. When it says the angel of the Lord, that's usually Jesus the creator. Another way to say it is, uh, the word of the Lord. Angel is messenger came and sat under the terrant at, uh, Oprah, which belongs to Joe Ash, the abide while his son Gideon. Now we get to Gideon was beating out wheat in the wine press. Lemme ask you this, is a wine press a good place to beat out the wheat and separate the wheat from the chaff? No, because a wine press is small and to separate wheat and chaff, lemme just explain it to you. Um, you throw it in the air and the chaff blows away and the wheat falls to the ground. Two things. You need space and wind. If you're in a wine press, what do you not have? Space or wind? Right? You're right. You're in a phone booth, threshing wheat. What this means is, uh, he doesn't even feel safe to be outside. And he has allowed all the circumstances in his life to make his life miserable. And he's just trying to survive. And here's, uh, what it says, um, to hide from the midianite. So what's he doing? He's hiding. He's like, I'm not even gonna fight anymore. I don't have any fight left in me. And the angel of the Lord appeared to him and said to him, the Lord is with you. Oh, mighty man of valor. Lemme say this. God, God will tell you who you are. You don't tell God who you are, and we'll talk about this. And Gideon said to him, please my Lord, if the Lord is with us, why then has all this happened to us? He immediately goes into the, oh, now we can have a pity party for Tim. He's like, why? My life sucks. Everything's cratered. What's happening? I'm very frustrated. And where are all his wonderful deeds that our fathers recounted to us saying, did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt? He's like, I read the Bible. You can do stuff. How come you're not doing stuff? But now the Lord has forsaken us. Here's what he's basically saying. I know that God exists, but I don't think he's good. And let me say that many men get to that place. You're not an atheist. You think that God is just like an abusive father. That's not true. But that's what you think. 'cause that's how you feel. And the Lord turned to him and said, go in this might of yours and save Israel from the hand of Midian. Do I not send you? He's like, well, if you don't like the Midian, nice, go defeat them. And he said to them, please, Lord, how can I save Israel? Behold my clan is the weakest. So of the, of different clans, his was the, the smallest, poorest, weakest clan. And I'm the least in my father's house. I'm the runt to the litter. And the Lord said to him, and here's the key, but what I will be with you and you shall strike the Midianites as one man. And he said to him, if he, he's still doubting God's calling, I have found favor in your eyes, grace, then show me a sign that night, the Lord said to him, pull down the altar of Baal that your father has his dad's a pagan and cut down the astra dirty, naughty, sexual symbol that is beside it. This is like saying, you know, in, in the old school time, go burn your dad's Playboy collection and pour out all his liquor bottles and uh, and and, and do it immediately that is beside it. And build an altar to the Lord. You need to start worshiping outta your house, your God, on top of the stronghold here with stones laid in due order. And here's the last portion of the story that we'll deal with, then take the second bullet and offer it as a burnt offering with the wood of the asra that you shall cut down. So Gideon took 10 men of his servants, and he did as the Lord had told him. But because he was, he's too afraid of his family and the men of the town to do it by day. He what did it in the middle of the night. Here's what you need to know about suffering. And Gideon here is suffering. Some suffering is personal. Some of it is national. His suffering here is certainly at least partially personal, but some of it's national. Some of you guys right now, the suffering, the hardship, the difficulties you're going through, it's because of decisions you've made. Sometimes it's not because of decisions you made. The company made a decision and, and that affected your employment. Your wife made a decision and that broke your marriage. Um, your extended family made a decision and they have turned against you. Uh, you are in a nation that is poorly governed and led and we're lacking leadership. And the result is that people under those leaders, they have certain issues that are complicated because the leadership has failed them. In addition, um, the longer hardship drags on, it becomes an oppression, okay? And here what it says is that Gideon was under this oppression for seven years. Every day you wake up for seven years, you're like, it's not gonna change today. It's not

gonna change tomorrow. Where is a man's soul? After seven years of loss, failure and decline, it's dark. If you're a man, you, you're like, you know what? I'm in a very dark place. Like there's not a lot of hope. And and maybe at the beginning of this seven year journey, I was thinking, okay, it's gonna get better. Today's the day. Then one day you wake up and you're like, I think I'm just doomed. That's where he is at. And so what Gideon has done, and this is what many men do, he he surrendered to a brutal life. Can you see it? He surrendered to a brutal life. He stopped dreaming, he stopped planning, he stopped fighting, and he stopped visioning a future. He said, you know what? My life just sucks. And eventually I'm gonna die. Okay? Now, can we be honest? Does every man at some point get to this place? Okay, now if you're 19, you're like, I don't know, it's coming. Okay? Okay. At some point, every man hits this place where it's like, I don't like where I'm at and I don't think it's gonna change. I, I've been there. It was a dark place. And what he's dealing with here is fear. And it says he was hiding 'cause he was afraid. And it says that he obeyed God in the middle of the night to tear down his dad's demonic altar to bail a perverted male demon, God, an astra, a perverted, demonic female god goddess who have illicit sexual union. Uh, but he's doing it at night. 'cause he's afraid. And here's where fear comes from. Uh, for a man, fear is about two things. Uh, the future and the unknown. That's where fear comes. So as a man, you look into the future and you, it's unknown or uncertain That causes fear in the present. Looking into the future causes fear in the present. Um, some of you guys, I just feel like I'm supposed to say this, some of you guys are gonna struggle more with fear than others because you are the guys who like everything to be in order. You are the guys who like to have data and control. You are the guys who like to have a plan and not pivot from it. How many of you are lawyers, attorneys, accountants, engineers? Let me say, you guys will have a higher probability of fear and anxiety because you don't have enough data to anticipate what the future will hold. And to make a plan that you and those you care about will be okay. Okay? How many of you're creative artists, okay? You're going to be less stressed and poorer, okay? Because as you look into the future, you're like, I don't know. And so you're gonna be less stressed, but you're also not gonna make as much of a plan for the future. So God hardwired us with different skills. And some of you men just by nature of your hard wiring, not knowing the future, not knowing the data, not knowing the details, that's gonna cause you fear and anxiety in the present. But here's what fear does. Number one, fear turns men into false prophets. A prophet is someone who looks into the future and tells you what's gonna happen. A false prophet is someone who looks into the future and says something is gonna happen. And it doesn't. Let me say this, the most dangerous false prophet in your life is you. And what some men will do when they look into the future, they have fear or anxiety, or they're overwhelmed. They're, they start prophesying doom, we're gonna get divorced. This isn't gonna work out. Our kids are gonna hate Jesus. My boss is gonna fire me. And all of a sudden, you are the one who is the false prophet in your life. How many of you men have feared a future prophesied and it didn't happen? We've all done that, right? So you know what it is to be a false prophet. In addition, what happens when men have fear? It's vision without hope, it's looking into the future, but it's saying, you know what, I don't think God is going to be there. So literally, fear is godless saying, okay, fear's the future, God will not show up. The future is godless. God will not be there. The result is, now I have to carry all the fear, anxiety, and burden. And what happens is fear of tomorrow robs you of today. I just feel very inclined in the Holy Spirit to just stress this. Um, and I'll tell you what, I'm seeing some, sometimes I see things. Um, I'm seeing fathers who aren't present with their children emotionally and mentally and spiritually. And I'm seeing men who are physically with their wives, but they're not emotionally, mentally, spiritually, present with their wife because they're so overwhelmed with the fear of the future, that they're missing the opportunity in the moment. Does that make sense? You could be so worried about what might happen at work that as your daughter is talking to you, you didn't hear it, you're so worried of what could happen to your finances that as your wife is sort of debriefing the day you didn't even hear or, or you could be so worried about all your responsibilities and duties. And sometimes, I'll be honest with you, man, fear in the future for a man is not always about failure. I feel like I need to say this as well. Let me say this. As a man, sometimes the hardest thing to manage is success. Because when you fail, people encourage you. When you succeed, they attack you. For some of you, your fear is sustaining your success. You're like, I got a company. How do I keep it going? Right? I, I, we're generating revenue, but how do we keep the profit margin rolling? Um, I'm

getting way off my notes, but you guys seen that show? Uh, alone? Yeah. Alone. Okay? So at the beginning of the show alone, the show alone is they drop some people off. In the middle of the woods, you get a few items, and the last person who's alive and doesn't tap out winds, okay? So now you gotta get shelter and food and water and fire, and you've gotta, you gotta take care of yourself. So when the show starts, what's the, what's one of the first things that they, their anxiety, their fear is about looking at the future and saying, I need what? Okay, water, and I need fire. I need shelter. And once I get those things, I need food, food, especially protein. Amen. All right, so there's zero vegetarians, by the way, have won alone. So it's protein, okay? So then all of your energy goes toward, I gotta go get, I gotta go get meat. As soon as you get the meat, what's your next fear? How do I store the meat? Because as soon as I get the meat, what happens? All the predators come and try and take my protein. Sometimes as a man, your fear is I'm not gonna make it. Other times it's like, uh, they're gonna come and steal all my, my meat, right? They're gonna, they're gonna rob my business, they're gonna gut my family, they're gonna take my daughter, right? And so sometimes as a man, the fear is about failing. And sometimes the man has fear because he wants to sustain his success. But either way, if you are so future oriented, you're not gonna be present in the moment. Okay? I feel like I'm supposed to ask this in the Holy Spirit, this, and these are verbal process talks, so take it for what it's worth. But how many of you guys, your dad was around, but he wasn't around. He's like, he's just not listening. He's not paying attention. He's not asking, Hey, how are you doing? Your dad's not looking in the eye. He, he's just gone. And some of you, your dad would be like, whatcha you talking about? I came home every night for dinner. I was there. I was like, no, you weren't. You were living in the future because you were living in the fear of the future. And as a man, there's always something to be afraid of, especially tomorrow. I, and for some of you guys, I don't want this to be, um, I don't want this to be a condemning, there's now no condemnation for those who are in Christ. I don't want this to beat you down, but I want it to open a category of, yeah, is this an issue for me? Do I have fear, anxiety? Am I always future oriented? So I'm not present with the people that I love the most? And am I causing not only anxiety to myself 'cause of my fear, but am I creating an anxious, fearful environment in my home with my family and fear over time? It leads to demon oppression. What I would say is we're Gideon is at, he's oppressed. And the Bible says that the Lord has not given us a spirit of fear. Fear comes with a demonic spirit of oppression. And some of you men, let me say this, uh, some of you men, um, it's not a sin you need to repent of. It's a spirit that you need to reject because you've accepted an oppression over your life. That's Gideon. Gideon's life is just, he's living under an oppressive spirit. Culture's bad, country's bad. I'm weak, I'm small. I can't make any difference or change. No one cares about me. I'm just going to hide and I'm going to just survive. And my whole goal is just to grind out this miserable life and then be done with it. Okay? And this is where men, I could see it on some of your faces. This talk is going a very different direction than I was anticipating. Some of you guys have actually contemplated suicide. You've reached a point where it's like, you know what? You to hell with it, right? That's when you know that there's a spirit of oppression that's come over your life as a man. You look at the future and you're like, I think dying would be better than trying. Okay? You need to know all of that's demonic. That's not your father. That's the father of lies. That's not the Holy Spirit. That's an unholy spirit. Back to the story of, and lemme just, um, I just, f**k, I'm supposed to pray for you, father. God, I pray against the enemy of servants. Their works and facts. And God is men. I know we like to be strong. We don't like to be weak. We want to have faith. But sometimes we struggle with fear, Lord, as these men are taking on their God-given responsibilities, they're, they're, they're here or hearing this 'cause They wanna be godly men. They wanna be the father sons. They wanna be good husbands and take care of their wife. They want to be good fathers who bless their children. God. They're, they're taking on a lot of responsibility, but God that can give them a lot of fear about the future. And so, Lord, right now, I pray against the spirit of fear. And we say that the Lord rebuke you in Jesus' name. And Lord, I pray for a lifting of oppression over men. I pray for men who have just settled for a painful and miserable life, that they would realize that they have a father who loves them and can lead them and guide them. And Jesus, as you came to sit with Gideon, I pray that you would come to sit with these men, that you would send the Holy Spirit to encourage, uh, to motivate, to inspire and to renew their strength. And Lord, uh, when we get together, sometimes it's, it's easier as men just to talk about our good days and not our bad days and

our, our wins and not our losses and our victories and not our defeats. But Lord, I thank you that when we're in that place of sort of brokenness and oppression and frustration and isolation, as Gideon was, that Lord Jesus, you can find us. You found him when he was hiding. And Lord, some of us have been hiding from you. And I pray right now, Lord Jesus, that you would make your presence very powerfully known to those men who've been hiding. And I pray that they would know you're not coming for them to punish them, um, but to bless them and to help them, and to love them and to serve them because Lord Jesus, you've been exactly where they are and you made it through. And I thank you that you're faithful to get them through. And we thank you in advance for that act in Jesus' good name. Amen. Amen. Um, I really love you guys. I really do. And it means the world to me that you would let me be your pastor and teach you. And we just live in a world that just dishonors, disregards and denigrates men. And we live in a world that quite frankly just treats men like crap. And then if a man says, Hey, this isn't working, then he's just supposed to suck it up and be a man. And so I want you guys, uh, the reason we call this real man is 'cause we're just gonna be honest. 'cause the Bible's honest. And um, and if God can use Gideon to command an army, I think he has something for you. And if, um, God can start with Gideon, when he's scared to death and hiding, even if you're starting in a bad place, if Jesus shows up, that's a good place to start. Okay? Lemme share a few more things from Gideon. Um, I do have notes. Um, Gideon feared the world. So we withdrew true or false men, we do that we withdraw and be, be be concerned about. Any guy you're like, he doesn't call anymore. He doesn't text. I haven't seen him in a while. He is not been at church. He doesn't show up to real men. Like, where did he go? That's isolation. That's dangerous. Gideon feared his enemy. So he, he hid true false men. If we don't think we can win the fight, we hide. Right? You're like, uh, my wife's gonna yell at me. I'm not coming home. Uh, my wife is gonna yell at me. I will be in the garage, right? My boss is going to give me a bad performance review. It's amazing. I got covid again. You know, gotta call in sick for the covid, even though you don't believe in covid. Uh, but you're hiding. You're hiding. Uh, Gideon feared the future. So he questioned God's goodness. He said, God, well, I heard you were good. I'm not seeing that. You know, you're in a dark and oppressed place when you start to think that God is not a good God. Um, I'll be, I'll be honest with you, since we're being honest, um, I was in a very dark place some years ago. My, uh, sweet wife, grace, she said, uh, she said, how's, how's your relationship with God? I said, well, I, I don't know, not not great if I'm honest. And I was a pastor. Um, and she said, well, what do you think about God? I said, uh, she said, do you think he's in control of your life and circumstances? I said, yeah, I do. And I also think he's an a-hole. That's what the pastor said to his wife named Grace, okay, okay. Outta the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks and what that means. And my wife looked at me and she was like, I'm worried. I was like, yeah, me too. Um, because I wasn't an atheist, but I was someone who thought that the problems in my life were because God hated me. And if he's my father, that makes him an abusive father. And if your father is abusing you, the last person you will run to for help is your father. So even in that moment, my, my theology said otherwise, but, but my emotional processing got me into a dark place. And Grace looked at me, um, and she's like, uh, what if the kids felt that way about you as their father? And I, I was like, oh my gosh. I was like, well, if any of the kids thought that I was in control, but I was a dangerous a-hole, I couldn't imagine the life that would cause for my children. She said, well, your father loves you the way you love your kids. I was like, okay, I gotta get my head on straight. Um, I love my kids and I'm one of the father's kids. How about this one? Um, Gideon feared his calling. So he questioned Jesus assignment. Jesus is like, well, let's fix it. Gideon's like, no way. No way. I, I would rather, I would rather lose than risk. Gideon feared God's word. So he asked for signs. God's like, here's do this. He's like, well, prove it. Gimme a sign. Lemme say this. Uh, and what's gracious about God is he gives him a sign. But ultimately, when God gives you a word, you don't need a sign. You need to obey the word. Gideon feared his family. So he tore her down the altar at night. That was fear of man. And Gideon feared being defeated. So he lived defeated. If you fear being defeated, you're just going to live defeated. That's what he did. He's like, you know what, if I try and change my life, it's going to fail. So I'm going to accept that I am a failure. Now, here's where the story turns. Um, God was faithful, Gideon was fearful, but God was faithful. And here's a few good things to know. Our father hears an answers prayer. It says here that the people's cry went up to the Lord. The the prayer goes up. Jesus comes down, okay, let me say this. Um, it's always

good to pray and you can't pray too much, okay? You just can't pray too much. In addition, our father finds his sons, even when they are looking for 'em, question, was Gideon looking for God? No. Was God looking for Gideon? Yes. Some of you guys are wondering, you're like, why am I here? Why am I hearing this? What does this have to do with me? Although the Father is finding you, right? You're like the prodigal that ran away. And he's like, well, you're still my son. But in this occasion, he sends Jesus and, and he's he's sending Jesus to you right now. The reason you're here is Jesus. The reason you're listening is Jesus, um, that, that God is seeking worshipers and he's been looking for you. In addition, our father speaks destiny over his sons. So what is, what is, what does Jesus call Gideon mighty warrior? This guy has no fight in him. What he says is, I'm the littlest in my family, and my family is the weakest of the clans. The whole reason I'm hiding is I don't do fighting. He's like, you're a mighty warrior. Um, I feel like I'm supposed to tell you this. The Bible says that, uh, the tongue holds the power of life and death. Okay? So the way that the father is fathering his son, Gideon is how he wants to father you. But then he, he wants us to father our children, especially our sons this way. So what you don't do, you don't speak where your son is at. You speak the destiny that God is calling him to, and then he'll rise up to it. That's why you never call your son an idiot. A failure, a disappointment. You don't speak where he is. You speak where he will be when the grace of God is activated in his life. Okay? And so what God is calling Gideon is not where he's at, but where he will be when God is done with him. He's a mighty warrior. Now, he's not a mighty warrior, but he's going to ascend into that. You and I, we need to be very careful not to curse each other or curse our children, especially curse our sons. 'cause we live in a culture, I'll be honest with you, all it does is curse the men. And all it does is curse the young men. And so we wanna put blessing. And what happens is if you put blessing over a son, a son rises up to that blessing. And that's what the Father does here through Jesus. He says, you're a mighty warrior. Um, man, this has gotten really, um, this talk has gotten really prophetic. I feel like I'm supposed to say something else. Um, some of you have heard things about your identity and you think it's from the Lord or you think it's from you. And it was from the Father of lies. Um, and I'm gonna ask the Holy Spirit right now to bring to mind for any of you men, a lie, a name, a title, a word, a cursing that you have heard and or believed and you have accepted is who you are. And it is not from the Father. It's from the father of lies. You're an idiot. You're a failure. You're hopeless, you're disappointment. Um, you're just like your father. You'll never change. There's no hope for you. Um, you should kill yourself. Okay? Some of you men have heard these things and, and you've accepted them. That's who I am. That's my identity. No, no, no, no, no, no. He calls you son calls you mighty warrior, right? Um, there's a line, um, in Revelation. It says that, um, Satan is the accuser of the children of God. And he accuses them day and night. The way that you know, that you're hearing from the father of lies is it's in the second person. When you hear something in the second person, this isn't in my notes, but I believe it's from the spirit for you. When you hear something you, that's either from the Father or the father of lies, okay? Um, you are a failure. That's the father of lies. You are a disappointment. That's the father of lies. You are never going to change. That's the father of lies. You need to just suck it up. Things aren't gonna change. That's the father of lies. You should kill yourself. That's the father of lies, okay? Because the Father doesn't speak that kind of thing over his sons. Now, some of you, you thought that this is negative self-talk, negative self-image, negative self-esteem. But let me ask you this. Do you walk around referring to yourself as you? No. No. When you hear you, someone is speaking to you. This isn't something that you are speaking over yourself. It either comes from the Father or the Father of lies. And for some of you men, the reason that, um, the reason that you've lost your courage is you've forgotten your identity. Okay? The reason that you've lost your courage is you've forgotten your identity. Um, at this point in the story, does Gideon have courage? No. But he has an identity. His identity is mighty warrior. Once you know your identity, you get your courage. Am I making any sense? That's why at the baptism of Jesus, the Father speaks from heaven and says, this is my son. There's his identity with whom I'm well pleased. You can't lose your salvation, but you can lose your confidence. Is that true? I'll be honest. Uh, this is not a sermon, this is just something else. But there was a season when I lost confidence. I lost confidence that there was a future for me. I lost confidence that there was blessing for me. I lost confidence that God would use me again. I lost confidence because I forgot my identity. I'm a son, right? I'm not an orphan and I'm not a bastard. I'm a son and the father is not done with

me. And the father isn't ashamed of me, and the father hasn't abandoned me. And the Father isn't overwhelmed by me. My father can handle me. And I have a good dad. Some of you guys have lost your confidence because you've forgotten your identity. And I believe that's what God is here doing to Gideon. He is like mighty warrior. He doesn't have any confidence. But you don't start with confidence. You start with an identity. And then if you have faith in that identity that comes from the Father, not from the father of lies, that's the source for your confidence. Where you're gonna see in the story of Gideon, he actually becomes a soldier. He goes into war. He defeats an army. He liberates a nation. It's pretty impressive for a coward. But the difference between the coward and the courageous, Jesus showed up and he accepted, had faith in the identity that God gave him. Um, I'll just close with this. Um, the Holy Spirit reminds me, there's a line in this Gideon story. He says, almighty man of valor. Um, I think it's the next line. God says, the Lord is with you. That's the, that's the key. The key is not that you're strong, but that the Father is with you and he is your strength. And it's not that you're gonna prove to God that you can do it. It's that the Father loves his son and he's gonna do it with you. The number one command in the Bible, in some form or fashion is fear, not 'cause there's a lot of things to be afraid of. And almost every time I've looked them all up in the same orbit, it says, for I am with you. So hear me men, when you look into the future, don't forget your father. And that your father is over the future. And that he sends Jesus to be with you as he sends Jesus to be with Gideon. And Gideon leads you and rather Jesus leads you through it. And he goes through it with you. I've been through more than I thought I could have survived. My family's been through more than they should have endured. My marriage has been through more than it should have ever survived. My kids have been through more than any pastor's kids should have ever had to endure. And here we are. God has been faithful. And, and, and God has been completely faithful. Can I close with one story for the weirdest talk in the history of any men's meeting? Yeah. Um, so I'll tell you a story. I've told this story a lot, but it just comes to mind. It kind of summarizes the point. So, um, I first I'm gonna apologize to my son 'cause I'm gonna tell a story about my son, uh, and he's in the room and his name is Gideon. So sorry son. Um, and so, uh, when my son Gideon was little, we were taking a trip, we were going to Scotland. Some of you heard this story and I was really excited to go to Scotland with my son. And so I, um, I remember getting down on his level multiple times. So I didn't, you know, domineering, I'm an old catcher, so I get down in the squat and I said, Hey little buddy, we're going to Scotland. Yeah, we're, I did say where I said, uh, Hey little buddy. Uh, you're going to Scotland. You're going to Scotland. The little guy. He's like, I'm not going. He's like, what? I was like, you're, you're gonna see castles. You're gonna go to John Knox's house. You're gonna have biscuits every day for lo you're gonna be on an airplane, you're gonna travel the world, you're gonna ride in a ca. I started selling it. He just got, he is like, there is no, he's little guy. He is like, there's no way. I'm not going to Scotland. I'm not going. I was like, look, little buddy, you're gonna do this. You're gonna do this. You're gonna eat this, you're gonna go here. You're gonna stay in a hotel. It is gonna have here. I'm selling it. And the more I sold it, more fear, he's like, I'm not going. I can't go. I won't call. I am not going. And I looked at him, I said, little buddy, I said, it's not gonna be any fun if you don't go with me. He looked at me, he is like, oh, you're going right? I was like, ah, yeah, I probably should have led with that. Uh, he's like, okay, great. Okay. You are a son. The son never goes alone. Lemme pray for you, give you some time and grip. Father, thanks for time together. Holy Spirit. Please use the weirdest talk I've ever given. And, uh, Lord, we just confess as men like Gideon, we've all been there. It ain't working. We don't know how to fix it. We don't have it. We can't do it. We don't wanna say it. We just hide. We don't want anybody to see us. We certainly don't want anyone to know. And then Jesus shows up and says, I've been here too and I'm here to help. And so, Lord Jesus, we invite you into it. And Father, we trust you over it in Jesus' name. Love you guys. Thanks for letting me teach.