

## More Than You Think You Are

Sunday February 1, 2026 - 10:00 a.m.

Pastor Chris Micks, Cedarview Community Church, Newmarket, On

I'd like to invite you this morning to open up your Bibles with me to the book of Judges chapter 6. This morning what I'd like to do is correct a misunderstanding that many Christians have. I think this is a mistake that especially Pentecostal and charismatic Christians make. It's the idea that the Holy Spirit's ministry is completely different in the New Testament from the Old Testament, that He didn't empower people in the Old Testament. All of that began on the day of Pentecost. I believe that is not true.

What is different is the range of the Holy Spirit's ministry. In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit came upon select individuals such as judges, prophets, priests and kings. He empowered them for specific tasks and season, sometimes withdrawing and later returning. In the New Testament, however, the Holy Spirit has been given to all believers, continually. That is the difference. His ministry itself has always been the same.

There are a number of Old Testament stories that show how the same unchanging Holy Spirit who came and equipped the church on the day of Pentecost was already working in similar ways centuries earlier. And we could jump in on a number of different stories, quite honestly, but the one that I've chosen to focus on, I think, is one of the best examples for us. And it's here in Judges chapter 6.

Here we read the story of a man by the name of Gideon and about his own personal Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came into his life in a whole new way. So let's read about it together. Judges chapter 6, starting at verse 11.

**“Now the angel of the Lord came and sat under the terebinth at Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the winepress to hide it from the Midianites. And the angel of the Lord appeared to him and said to him, “The Lord is with you, O mighty man of valour.” And Gideon said to him, “Please, my lord, 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.”**

**And the Lord turned to him and said, “Go in this might of yours and save Israel from the hand of Midian; do not I send you?” And he said to him, “Please, Lord, how can I save Israel? Behold, my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.” And the Lord said to him, “But I will be with you, and you shall strike the Midianites as one man.”**  
(Judges 6:11 – 16)

Let me give you a little bit of background. Now, the Israelites had been in the promised land for generations. And then they had begun to be ruled by the judges in that land. The Bible says during that period, every man did what was right in his own eyes. And it became a chaotic period where they would do well for a little while, but then they would disobey God and they would be brought under their enemy's oppression until they would cry out to God.

And then God would again raise up another deliverer, another judge who would help them. Gideon is one of these leaders that God raised up, but he comes along at a time when they had been under terrible oppression for seven years from the Midianites and the Amalekites.

And in the middle of that oppression, Gideon, it says, was down in a wine press. Not the normal place where you would thresh wheat from the harvest, but that's where he was doing it because he was hiding. He knew that if he went out in the normal place on the side of a mountain where they would thresh wheat, then the Midianites or the Amalekites would come and they would steal away the harvest that he needed to feed his family.

So he's down there in the wine press and he's threshing wheat. Now, you could say at least he was showing some ingenuity, some creativity, but hardly at this point could you call him a hero. He's just an average guy. Nobody knows who Gideon is. Until suddenly, there in the wine press, hiding from his enemies, trying to feed his family, it says, the angel of the Lord appeared to him. Capital A. Angel. Because the translators and the scholars of the Old Testament have recognized that this is a reference to the second person of the Trinity.

It's a reference to the pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus in history hundreds and hundreds of years before he came to be born as a babe in Bethlehem. How many know Jesus has always been God? He had no beginning. He's the son of God forever, and he came into the world a number of times in the Old Testament to speak to people, and he's known as the Angel of the Lord. So Jesus appeared to Gideon.

Now, I want you to see here Jesus' view of Gideon. Look at verse 12. He says, **“You mighty man of valour.”** This average guy hiding from his enemies down in a wine press. **“You mighty man of valour.”** He's not dressed in armour. He doesn't have a shield or sword. He's doing farm work, hiding away. **“You mighty man of valour.”**

How could Jesus call him this? I'm sure that when he said it, Gideon kind of looked over his shoulder. “Who's he talking to? I'm the only guy here. Why is he calling me a mighty warrior?” Because Jesus knows what he can make people to become. This is a vision of what Gideon was going to be in a very short period of time. **“You mighty man of valour.”**

He calls Gideon that, but it's a very different estimation than Gideon had of himself at that point. If you jump down a couple of verses to verse 15, he says **“Please, Lord, how can I save Israel? Behold, my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.” (Judges 6:15)** He's saying, you know, in all of Israel, Ephraim is like the... we're the weak clan. And out of all of the families of that weak clan, my family's the smallest, and I am the runt of the litter. You come to me. I am the least of Israel. How is it that you can call me a mighty man of valour?

He sees himself as the least of the least. Now, some might want to take up this point and say that Gideon's problem was that he had a low view of himself. I've heard people preach that. You know, Gideon's big problem was that he just had a low self-esteem. He had to kind of shake that off. He had to get past that.

But I believe the opposite is actually true. His very humble view of himself is the one thing that he really had going for him. He really did see himself as the least of the least, and that's who God can use. Because here is the principle that runs as a thread right through the Bible. God is attracted to weakness.

Go read 1 Corinthians 1, where it talks about not many mighty, not many noble, not many great being called. He chooses the weak things. God is attracted to weakness. I was reading Jim Cymbala's book, *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire*. In that book, he made this statement.

I want you to read it with me. Jim Cymbala said, **“That evening, when I was at my lowest, confounded by obstacles, bewildered by the darkness that surrounded us, unable to even continue preaching, I discovered an astonishing truth. God is attracted to weakness. He can't resist those who humbly and honestly admit how desperately they need him. Our weakness, in fact, makes room for his power.”**

Gideon's view of himself was not a handicap, It was a head start. For him to be the one who recognized he was the lowest of the low, that's the only way you can come to God, is in humility. **1 Peter 5:5, “Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”** (everybody needs that verse underlined in their Bible; “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble”)

You learn that one lesson, you take that one statement away from church today, that will transform your whole life. Just to know God resists the proud, but he gives grace to the humble.

Have you been living in ways that you know have been dishonouring to God? Have you run away from God? Maybe you are completely out of God's will and you know it. If you will humble yourself before God today, he will meet you, he will bring you back to himself.

The Lord came to Gideon and began to use him. Now come down a little further in the chapter Judges 6 down to verse 25. Judges 6 verse 25.

**“That night the Lord said to him, “Take your father's bull, and the second bull seven years old, and pull down the altar of Baal that your father has, and cut down the Asherah that is beside it and build an altar to the Lord your God on the top of the stronghold here, with stones laid in due order. Then take the second bull and offer it as a burnt offering with the wood of the Asherah that you shall cut down. So Gideon took ten men of his servants and did as the Lord had told him. But because he was too afraid of his family and the men of the town to do it by day, he did it by night. (Judges 6:25 – 27)**

Here's the word of the Lord, tear down your father's altar to Baal and the wooden image he has beside it. So Gideon was obedient to the word of the Lord, but notice again he did it at night time for fear of his dad and his father's household. So he's still not the mighty man of valour, is he? He's still doing all this and he's not going to dad, “We've got to get rid of the altar of Baal!”

No, no, no, he sneaks in under the cover of darkness and obeys the Lord, but he does it all covertly. You would think that after he had met the angel of the Lord, after he had met Jesus face to face, all his fear would be dispatched, right? Well let me ask you, is that what happened to you when you came to Jesus? Did you instantly become fearless, doubtless in every circumstance?

There was yet to come an experience that was to transform Gideon and bring him out of hiding at last. And we read it a little further down in the same chapter in verse 34, look at what it says, this is our text this morning,

**“But the Spirit of the Lord clothed Gideon, and he sounded the trumpet, and the Abiezrites were called out to follow him.” (Judges 6:34)** Notice what it says, “and he sounded the trumpet”, after what? After the spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon. “But the Spirit of the Lord clothed (or came upon) Gideon and he sounded the trumpet.” Then he's out of hiding, now he's making a loud noise, he's drawing attention.

This is Gideon's Pentecost moment, his personal experience of the Holy Spirit brought him out of hiding. Some people think that what the New Testament describes as the baptism in the Holy Spirit is an all-new experience for the New Testament church, that nothing like it had been seen until the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came into the upper room in Jerusalem where those 120 believers were gathered.

Let me read it to you, Acts 2 verse 2: **“And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.” (Acts 2:2 – 4)**

We remember that scene and there's people who think that was when the Holy Spirit first began to empower people in this way. They think it was entirely new, but that is a misunderstanding. It's a misunderstanding that preachers have created inadvertently because we have sought to emphasize the differences of the operation of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament compared with the Old Testament.

But we've also got to recognize the similarities. How many of you know the Holy Spirit is God and God does not change? And the Holy Spirit has always been about the same kind of works. What has changed is, as I said, the range of his ministry. But he has always come and empowered God's people to do mighty things.

The new part that was seen at Pentecost was that it became universal for the whole church and it became permanent. Listen, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the empowerment of the Holy Spirit is for every believer. There were 120 believers in the early church in the upper room. How many flames of fire were there? 120. How many were filled with the Holy Spirit, began to speak with other tongues? All of them, men and women, the oldest and the youngest.

Continuing in Acts chapter two, it says, **“And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 2:38)**

3,000 people there. It's not just the 120 who followed Jesus. All of them, you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Watch this **“For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.” (Acts 2:39)**

The fullness of the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, and it was permanent. The empowerment of the Holy Spirit remained with them for the rest of their lives.

In Old Testament times, the Holy Spirit would come upon a person for a purpose, for an event, for a battle, something God had called them to do for a season of ministry, for a reign as a king, whatever it was, but then the Holy Spirit would withdraw. But when he came to the believers in the early church, it was permanent. He took up residence.

The prophets had been foretelling that this day was coming. You can read it in a number of places in the Old Testament. When God would pour out His Spirit upon all flesh. Isaiah says, His laws are going to be written on your hearts now.

The prophet Joel said, your young men will see vision, your old men will dream dreams. Your daughters and your sons will prophesy. Jump to the New Testament, Jesus said to the disciples, He is with you. He shall be in you. You've already experienced His presence with you. But it's going to be something else when He comes permanently and universally. He will never withdraw again.

And you know what the disciples did? They emphasized this in their lives. Acts chapter 2 is followed by Acts chapter 4. Paul writes in Ephesians 5, he says, being filled with the Holy Spirit. They constantly came for the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, who was not withdrawing.

Throughout church history, whenever someone, whenever any group of people have set themselves to ask God for His empowerment, the Holy Spirit has come again to anoint and to help them. The baptism of the Holy Spirit brings a person out of hiding. He gives that boldness to stand and to witness for the Lord, that power for service.

For just the next few minutes, I want to say a few things that the Bible teaches us about the wonderful experience of being clothed with power from on high and that we don't need to be afraid of it. The baptism with the Holy Spirit. These principles are seen here in the life of Gideon, and other men in the Old Testament.

And they are things that are plainly, plainly taught in the New Testament. So here we go. Four things.

## **1) THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS NEVER BEEN AN EXPERIENCE GRANTED ON THE BASIS OF “WORKS”**

This is the first thing we've got to lay down as a foundation, because it describes about the Holy Spirit's coming into a person's life. You don't earn the baptism in the Holy Spirit. It's not some special badge of honour for really spiritual people.

It's not a level of Christianity that you climb up to. No, nothing in the Christian life is given to us on that basis. It is all by grace, through faith, that not of yourselves, lest anyone should boast.

Pentecostals do not claim that we are special, that we are better, that we are closer to God, that we are more saved, we are more committed than other followers of Jesus. Gideon, by his own confession, had nothing going for him. He was not special. The Lord said, you mighty man of valour. He said, who are you talking about? But the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon and then he blew the trumpet.

There are even more striking examples. Just think about a couple of the characters in the Old Testament who the Holy Spirit came upon and empowered in wonderful ways. What about Samson? Do you think he earned the baptism in the Holy Spirit? Samson? That guy's life, I read it and I say, God, why do you have anything to do with him? Samson was constantly caught up doing his own thing. He sinned again and again. He strayed away from the Lord. He was disobedient. And yet, this is what it says about Samson in Judges chapter 14.

**“The Spirit of the Lord came powerfully on him, and he went down to Ashkelon and killed thirty of their men. He stripped them and gave their clothes to those who had explained the riddle. In a rage, Samson returned to his father’s house,” (Judges 14:19, CSB)**

He's a mixed up guy whose life really speaks of much weakness. And yet, the Spirit of the Lord came on him and he had this incredible strength. We could talk about King Saul, David, and others, but we won't for the sake of time.

It is not a reward for really spiritual people. Now, don't hear me as saying that it doesn't matter how you live. These are the exceptions that kind of confirm the rule. Normally, it's people who have a heart for God, that are seeking after God, that he will come and empower them to live for him in wonderful ways. But it's not a mark of someone who's become worthy of being baptized in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit comes upon who he will.

Let's be clear. The Holy Spirit does not begin his ministry in a believer's life when they are baptized in the Holy Spirit. Nobody in the church, in all of history, ever got saved without the ministry of the Holy Spirit. He's the one who convicts us of sin and of righteousness and of judgment. He brings people to repentance and faith. He imparts the spiritual life so that they are born again. He's the one who does all of this. That is all the work of the Holy Spirit.

From the moment you believe, the Holy Spirit is already working in your life. All believers have the Holy Spirit with them. From day one, the Holy Spirit begins to make people like Jesus, to make them holy, to sanctify them. That work is going on whether or not you have received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Everyone has the power of the Holy Spirit in their life from the day that they are born again.

Which brings us to the second point that I've already begun to hint at. Let me state it plainly.

## 2) THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS ALWAYS BEEN AN ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE AFTER SALVATION

Lots of non-Pentecostal, non-charismatic churches teach that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is just what happens when a person is converted. The Spirit comes into a person's life. Everything is done at the moment of salvation. There's nothing more to seek after.

But that is not the testimony of the Scriptures anywhere. In the Old Testament, Gideon, Samson, Saul, they were all the covenant people of God. They were part of God's nation, Israel. David was serving God faithfully, already described as a man after God's own heart. And then something additional happened.

Look at it in 1 Samuel 16 verse 13. **“So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully on David from that day forward. Then Samuel set out and went to Ramah.” (CSB)**

David already was walking with God. He was already seeking the Lord as a shepherd boy. What faith he had when he went out and slew Goliath as a boy? And yet the Holy Spirit came upon him when he was anointed to be the king.

The disciples had been following Jesus for three years. They believed on him. Listen to the words of Jesus. He said to the disciples, **“Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you.” (John 15:3)** They were saved. They were in right relationship with God. But they had not yet been baptized in the Holy Spirit. They had to wait in Jerusalem to be clothed with power from on high. Not even the resurrection baptized them with the Holy Spirit. It was 50 days later that they were baptized in the Spirit.

It continues on in the New Testament. After Pentecost, there's a revival that broke out down in Samaria through the preaching of Philip. You read it in Acts chapter 8. Acts 8 verse 14, it says:

**“Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.” (Acts 8:14 – 16)**

They've received the word. They've been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Are they Christians? Of course they are. But they had not been filled with the Holy Spirit. This is another event. Happened again.

Turn over a few pages to Acts chapter 19 with the Ephesian believers.

**“And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. And he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” And they said, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” And he said, “Into what then were you baptized?” They said, “Into John's**

**baptism.” And Paul said, “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus.” On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying.” (Acts 19:1 – 6)**

It's a separate event. Later on, Paul writes a letter to that very church, the church at Ephesus, and he reminded them about this. In Ephesians 1 verse 13, he said, **“In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.”**

When you heard and believed, there was something else. You were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit. And the Greek construct of that sentence shows it is two events. This is so clearly the New Testament teaching. I could give you a number of other examples. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is an experience that is subsequent to salvation. It is an empowerment to serve God.

But now, because you might say it's something extra, don't think that it's dispensable, that we can do without it. No, Jesus said to the disciples, Wait in Jerusalem. The apostles saw this as so essential. And they were concerned to follow up with new believers. They asked “Have you received the Holy Spirit? You must have this empowerment. Jesus told us it was important for us, so it must be important for you also.”

### **3) THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS ALWAYS BROUGHT A PERSON OUT OF HIDING**

That's what we saw in Gideon's life, right? He was hiding away until the Spirit of the Lord came upon him and he blew the trumpet. I don't need to say too much about it. We've already seen it in his life.

Peter and the other disciples scattered when Jesus died on the cross. When Jesus rose from the dead, where were they? They were hiding for fear of the Jewish leaders. And you know, they continued. Jesus was then with them for those 50 days. They were still not making a big public outcry.

But on the day of Pentecost, everything changed for them forever. Peter stood up and he preached that mighty sermon to the 3,000 people gathered. And then they took the gospel to the ends of the earth, never fearing a man again. You remember, they all gave their lives for Jesus Christ completely.

Do you long for boldness to share your faith, for courage? Do you long for God's special help and giftings in your life to be what he has called you to be in service and in ministry? The Holy Spirit makes the difference.

### **4) THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE ENTRY POINT TO A LIFE OF GOD'S SPECIAL GIFTINGS**

Now, every person has natural giftings that God will use. Everyone is blessed by God and he will help every person. But there are special giftings that God brings through the power of his Holy Spirit. What a military commander Gideon became. But it was never Gideon's brilliance. He didn't go to a military

college and get a degree in how to be a great commander. The wisdom that he received was from God. It was special direction from heaven itself and sometimes it didn't even make sense.

Next chapter, you got 32,000 soldiers. I want you to send home 31,700 of them and you're going to battle against tens of thousands of the enemy with 300 men. That's ridiculous. That is not military strategy but it was God's strategy. And God came and he moved in that battle and he won it for them. It resulted in victory.

Listen, here is the principle. **God's work done in God's way will know God's blessing and it will be successful in God's purposes.**

In the New Testament, we read about all kinds of gifts. In 1 Corinthians 12, nine manifestations of the Holy Spirit. That word literally you could translate as “out-flashings” of the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit is in the church among God's people and suddenly you see an out-flash of God's power either in revelation or in a healing or in some gift of faith, there will be an out-flashing. There are nine manifestations of the Holy Spirit listed there in 1 Corinthians 12. They are empowerments for serving God.

And I haven't got time to go into it this morning but listen, those manifestations mentioned there, they are the Holy Spirit's. They're not yours. It's not like, “oh, God used me to bring a word of knowledge or a word of wisdom or a word of prophecy. Now I'm a prophet.” Nonsense.

These gifts aren't residential. They come as the Holy Spirit wills but any spirit-filled believer can be used in these marvellous giftings of the Holy Spirit. How we need these things for accomplishing God's work His way.

So does Gideon's life resonate with you and your experience this morning? You are a child of God. You love the Lord. Oh, you want to serve Him. You're even industrious for Him and yet so often you feel inadequate and powerless. You want to speak out for God but you don't know what to say.

You want to be courageous but you have disappointed yourself by being timid and fearful at times. “I wish I had spoken to them. I wish I could have got past myself and done this.”

I put it to you. All those feelings that you have had are not a bad thing because you're right in the place where God can move in your life and bring you the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. You can seek after Him desperately. Seek to be filled with the Spirit and He will empower you.

There are some of you who know you have been called to go into ministry, to be a pastor or a global worker, but you have said “NO WAY!” I don't like speaking in front of people. Welcome to the club! But **God's work done in God's way will know God's blessing and it will be successful in God's purposes.**

Would you stand with me.