

Series: CHOOSE FAITH NOT FEAR

**“Maximize Your Faith!”
“Ephesians 3:20-21**

Big Idea: God is able to do more than I can ask or think.

Most people never take advantage of God’s abundant resources. Eph. 3:20 in the Amplified Version says, "God is able to do superabundantly, far over and above, all that we dare ask or think. Infinitely beyond our highest prayers, desires, thought, hopes, or dreams."

Matthew 9:29 *"According to your faith, it will be done to you."*

The key to unlock all God wants to do in your life is really simple: It’s Faith.

One writer called this “the Law of Expectations” which says basically, we get what we expect out of life. We tend to see what we expect to see, we tend to feel what we expect to feel, we tend to act the way we expect to act, and eventually, we tend to achieve what we expect to achieve. Your expectations influence your happiness, they influence your health. Your expectations influence your relationships.

There are two approaches to life and you get the choice.

You can choose to live by fear, or you can choose to live by faith.

You can be an optimist, or you can be a pessimist. By faith or by fear.

Job was sometimes a pessimist, and in Job 3:25, he says, "Everything I fear and dread comes true."

You know anybody like that? They focus on what they don’t want, not what they do want.

Paul on the other hand, was an optimist. And in Phil. 1:20, he says, "I live in eager expectation while I’m going through all these trials." He was an optimist. He could be cheerful even when life couldn’t be perfect.

When you expect the best, you’re honoring God.

It also increases your ability when you’re expecting the best.

Athletes know that the winning edge is attitude, not ability. It’s how you see it.

Do you know that Mohammed Ali only lost two fights in his lifetime? And both of these fights had one thing in common different from all the other fights: in a press conference prior to the fight, he said, "Now, if I lose this fight..." It’s the only time he ever said it, and he lost them both.

David went out to fight Goliath and he took stones with him. Super confidence! Everybody else was saying, "He's too big! We can't kill him." David was saying, "He's too big. I can't miss!" Expecting the best.

Not only that, expecting the best encourages others. Optimism is contagious.

How do you stay optimistic when everything seems to be going wrong? Let me give you six steps:

1. Start Your Day with Faith

In order to stay optimistic when everything else seems to be going wrong, whether it's at work or at school or in your finances or with your relationships, start your day with faith. Now you know, studies have shown that the first ten minutes of your day sets the tone.

Look at this verse, Psalm 5:3, "In the morning, O Lord, you hear my voice. In the morning I lay my request before you and I wait an expectation."

Start your day in faith. Don't start your day with the morning news.

Psalm 55:16 "As for me, I will call upon God, And the LORD shall save me.

17 Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud, and He shall hear my voice.'

2. Look for the good in your situation

Not everything is good, but look for the good in the situation. Romans 8:28, "For those who love God, who are called according to his plan, everything that happens fits into a pattern for good." Circle that. "Pattern for good." God specializes in bringing good out of bad.

You know that when Thomas Edison was sixty-seven years old, a great fire burned down his famous laboratories in New Jersey. And not only did he lose several million dollars in his equipment, he also lost his records to most of his life works. The next morning, he walked out among the charred embers and he said this: "There is great value in disaster. All our mistakes are burned up. Thank God we can start anew." He turned a stumbling block into a stepping stone. Look for the good in your situation.

3. Give your problems to God

So, what do I do when the situation looks impossible? Read these verses with me,

2 Corinthians 1:8 We were crushed and overwhelmed beyond our ability to endure, and we thought we would never live through it.

9 In fact, we expected to die. But as a result, we stopped relying on ourselves and learned to rely only on God, who raises the dead.

10 And he did rescue us from mortal danger, and he will rescue us again. We have placed our confidence in him, and He did help us and we expect Him to do it again and again."

Give your problem to God. When it looks like it's out of your control, you give it to God.

1 Peter 5:6 "Be humble under God's powerful hand so he will lift you up when the right time comes.

7 Give all your worries to him, because he cares about you."

4. Eliminate negative words

Ephesians 4:29 "When you talk, do not say harmful things, but say what people need—words that will help others become stronger. Then what you say will do good to those who listen to you."

Have you ever talked yourself into feeling bad? "You know, I feel so tired." You know you can talk yourself into anything. You can make yourself sick. Eliminate negative words.

Negative words. The Bible has a lot to say about this. Eph. 4:29, read it with me. "Don't use harmful words in talking. Use only helpful words. The kind that build up."

Now, it says there "use only". Circle the word "only". Use only helpful words. That means you should not have negative words in your vocabulary.

James 3:5, "The tongue is small thing. What enormous damage it can do. The tongue, the Bible says, is like a rudder on a ship. It's small, but it sets the course of your life. Stop talking and focusing on what you don't want and focus more on what you do want.

5. Associate with positive people

It is very important in discouraging times that you attach yourself to hopeful people. That's one of the reasons why it's good to join a good, warm, family church. Get around some positive people. Because the wrong crowd can bring you down.

1 Cor. 15:33, "Bad companions ruin good character." If you want to soar with the eagles, you can't run with the turkeys.

Psalms 1 says, "Happy is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly nor sits in the seat of the scornful."

1 Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers."

Why, because like optimism is contagious, so is pessimism.

Proverbs 13:20 Spend time with the wise and you will become wise, but the friends of fools will suffer.

I think you need to know the difference between the VIP's and VDP's. VIP's are Very Inspiring People. They lift you up. You need lots of them. VDP's are Very Draining People. You don't need many of them. You ought to have some just for a ministry.

Now look again at these two verses "God is able to do superabundantly, far over and above, all that we dare ask or think. Infinitely beyond our highest prayers, desires, thought, hopes, or dreams." That's almost like a blank check!

According to your faith, it will be done to you.

Eph 3:20 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. NIV

Eph 3:20-21 Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen. NASU

Eph. 3:20 in the Amplified Version says, "God is able to do superabundantly, far over and above, all that we dare ask or think. Infinitely beyond our highest prayers, desires, thought, hopes, or dreams."

God is Able -- Power ABOVE Us

Eph. 3:20 in the Amplified Version says, "God is able to do superabundantly, far over and above,

With God – you get more!!! You Always get more...(eg) My God is so Big, so Strong and so Mighty, there's nothing my God cannot do."

- We need to revive some of the children's praise songs

This is a fun phrase in the original language...Paul uses a double compound word...he makes up his own word phrase. He is so caught up in the BIGNESS and AWESOMENESS of God, he creates a new word phrase to make his point...He stacks these words upon each other in an attempt to say...

- God is not just Big but He is – Big-uhmundo-huge-a-riffic
- God is Fan-awe-stical-some. Awe-Magni-great-more-big-fully. Super-beyond-erful. Incredi-outrag-i-dible
- Beyond words – Paul is morphing all these words together to make his point...

- Paul is saying that God is -- Incredibly Incredible. Extravagantly Extravagant. Awesomely Awesome in His Awesomeness. Outrageously Outrageous. Fantastically Fantastical. Amazingly Amazing. Infinitely Infinite – all the time...

Here's what I believe the point is – There Ain't no box Big enough baby – to hold our God

- God is Aably Able in His Ability
- Our words cannot fully Express what we know and Feel. There's no such word that can contain ALL of WHO HE is and ALL of what He can do. Our God is Indescribably indescribable.

God is Able – that would be enough said. God Can! God is! God is Able to do!

- That would be enough to have our hearts beat with Confidence and Faith
- Our hearts would beat a few beats faster – Our God is Able to do more than what we ask or imagine...Oh yeah! Go God!
- Our hearts should be pounding in Praise – Our God is Able to do abundantly more...
- Our God is Able to do abundantly more beyond all we ask or imagine
- Our God is Able to do FAR MORE ABUNDANTLY BEYOND ALL

God Exceeds the Expectation...

- The Lord not only forgives a Sin – God can Forgive ALL your Sin
- God not only loves you when you're good – God loves you when you are bad
- God not only gives you the Hope of Heaven Today – God is preparing Heaven for You for All Eternity
- God not only gives us our daily bread – He gives us Steak and potatoes, the corn, the peas, the beans, the macaroni and cheese, a fresh green salad, hot apple pie and a scoop of your favorite ice-cream...and if you are still hungry – he'll let you pick up a Krispy Kreme donut for a snack.

He provides at just the right time, in just the right way, with everything I need and then some more.

- God is the God of the – “and then some more” (eg) – S'Mores)
- Listen to Lamentations 3:22-23 -- Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

God is Able to do MORE>>>>His Ability is --- Incredible, Outrageous, and Extravagant. He exceeds the Expectation...You Get more than what you expect...God is Faithful. God is Able..

- God didn't make just a single drop of water He made Oceans of water
- God didn't create just 1 star – God made Galaxies
- God didn't just make a single kind of bird – God created 1,000s kinds of birds
- God didn't just make a hill – God made the Rocky Mountains, the Himalayas, etc.
- God didn't just make the Sun – God makes Sunsets and Sunrises....
- He Exceeds all the Expectations...

- He is able to do far more abundantly beyond all we ask or imagine – Above and Beyond all...He Exceeds the Expectations with Excellence – He's God.

There are No Limits to His Love

- No Boundaries to His Blessing
- No Fences withholding His Faithfulness
- No Lines drawn separating us from His Salvation
- No GuardRails against His Grace
- No Containers holding His Compassion
- No Restrictions to Experiencing His Righteousness

If God is able to do all that – what can He do with your Life?

- What can He do with your Heart? With your Hands? With your Talents? With your Gifts?
- What can He do With Your Family? With your Friends? With you at School? With you at work?
- What can He do with your Future? With your Potential? With your Love?
- What can He do with your Challenges? With your Weakness? With your Problems? With your Disappointments?
- God is Able to do far more and abundantly beyond ALL we ask or think..
- *1 Corinthians 2:9 -- as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"- NIV*

By the way – I am Glad that God is not limited to what I ask or think – because there are times when my askin' is lackin' and my thinkin' is stinkin'.

- I'm glad that God is God and I'm not. I don't get it - all the time and I don't get it all – most of the time.
- I don't know what God knows. I don't see what God sees. I don't understand what God understands. I'm not where God is...
- I'm OK with that. I'm OK with letting God be God – I'm pretty sure that God is OK with that. because I really don't think I have a choice in that matter anyway. God is God and God is Able...

God is Able - Power WITHIN Us

Another Surprise – God's Power – God's "Able to do immeasurably more power!" His "FAR MORE ABUNDANTLY BEYOND ALL I can ask or think" Power? Guess where this Power is. Guess where this Power works.

Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us,

word - translated power, if transliterated into English, would be our word for dynamite. Dynamite Power. Explosive Energy. Awesome Ability. There is Tremendous power given and at work within us. God's Power in us.

Has this ever happened to you? It's snack time and you are going for the Fruit Smoothie.

- You get out the Blender...You put in a banana, few strawberries, some juice...
- What's wrong with this thing? It must be broken – I can't believe it...Broken at just the time I needed it. I was so looking forward to a fruit Smoothie.....
- Ooops. It's not broken...it's not plugged in.
- You have all the Power you need – but the Power is of no value unless you are plugged in and switched on!!!!

We've got to Get Plugged in – get connected with God. Get wired in. There is a Connection made so the Power can Flow...

- Then get turned On! Flip the Switch! We say, "YES" to the Lord. "I am ready to Receive You and what You have for Me.

You are the Power. You are My Strength. I need You. You are Able – I believe that. I will live that. I will trust that.

Power to do what? In a word – it is the Power to Love

Listen to the Prayer that Paul prays for these believers – It is a Prayer of Power and a Prayer for Power...Eph 3:16-19

- *16 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.*
- Jesus isn't just taking a Vacation with you. Your Heart becomes His Home. His address is now your life. He lives with you and in You – a Permanent Residence

And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18 may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge-that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

- The Power to be rooted in His Love –
- The Power to be established, grounded in Love...
- The Power to Grasp His Love – means to literally "take hold of it with the intent of never letting it go" To possess it. To seize this Love. To Comprehend how wide His love is, to grasp how long is His Love is – how far will His Love go to reach to you and to me. To grasp how High His love is – so High that it came down from the Throne of God. To grasp how deep is His Love –
- Power to know every dimension of His Love...
- Power to Know that this Love surpasses all that we can know about Love. There is nothing like this love. Not then. Not Now. Not ever. This love surpasses all our knowledge. We can never come to know all that love is but we can spend our lives trying. To know what can never be fully known. The more I learn of His Love for me the more I want to learn...
- Power to be Filled with God and to be filled with His Love...
- Power to Serve in His Love --
- Power to Surrender to His Love -- Gain -- Surrender – that Christ may dwell in your hearts. Surrender to Jesus as Lord...

God is Able – There is Power THROUGH Us

Eph 3:21-- to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

1. To Him be Glory in the Church...means that we, as the Church, the Called out ones of God, are to present God in all His Brilliant Splendor, that He is to be seen in all His Majestic Beauty.

2. To Him be the Glory in the Church -- This is our purpose. This is our mission. This is our desire. This is our value. This is what we live for...this is our essence

- Our lives are to be His Glory! Our Love is to be His Glory.

3. *Psalm 29:2 -- Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness.*

4. When I hear the word Glory – I think of the way we sing the word Glory in Choir --- GLOW-Ri. To Give Him Glory is to make Him glow...

- (eg) the spotlight of our lives are always directed to Him...always focusing the light on God. We Make Him Glow...Let Him Shine in all His Magnificence.

- We want others to see His Brilliant Splendor. We want others to see His Majestic Beauty.

- In John 15 – Jesus tells us – I am the Vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me – you can do nothing...If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to My Father's Glory that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples."

When God Exceeds the Expectation – We've got to let that be known. We must tell the story.

- The Power Comes in and the Glory Goes out --

- This prayer, these promises are for you!

Sergei Nikolaev was an energetic Christian leader in the Soviet Union. Many years ago, at the height of the Communist Atheism, faced with almost insurmountable opposition to the gospel of Jesus Christ, he said, "Don't look at the circumstances and don't look at what you can't do. Look at your Lord. Call on his power. Trust his timing. Don't put a period where God puts a comma."

F. Remember your future

Titus 2:11 "That is the way we should live, because God's grace that can save everyone has come.

12 It teaches us not to live against God nor to do the evil things the world wants to do. Instead, that grace teaches us to live now in a wise and right way and in a way that shows we serve God.

13 We should live like that while we are looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ..."

When you are discouraged and you want to be optimistic, remember your future. The Bible calls it our blessed hope. That is, if you are a believer and you put your faith in Christ, the final chapter of your life is not written yet. This life is not the end. There is heaven. There is coming return of Jesus Christ. And heaven is what we're waiting for.

There is a story about the old missionary couple who had been working in Africa for years and were returning to New York City to retire. They had no pension; their health was broken; they were defeated, discouraged and afraid. They discovered that they were booked on the same ship as President Teddy Roosevelt, who was returning from one of his big game hunting expeditions.

No one paid attention to them. They watched the fanfare that accompanied the president's entourage, with the passengers trying to catch a glimpse of the great man.

As the ship moved across the ocean, the old missionary said to his wife, "something is wrong. Why should we have given our lives in faithful service for God in Africa all these many years and have no one care a thing about us? Here this man comes back from a hunting trip and everybody makes so much over him, but nobody gives two hoots about us."

When the ship docked in New York, a band was waiting for the great President. The Mayor and other dignitaries were there. The papers were full of the President's arrival, but no one noticed this missionary couple. They slipped off the ship and found a cheap flat on the East side, hoping the next day to see what they could do to make a living in the city.

That night the man's spirit broke. He said to his wife, "I can't take this; God is not treating us fairly." His wife replied, "Why don't you go in the bedroom and tell that to the Lord?"

A short time later he came out from the bedroom, but now his face was completely different. His wife asked, "Dear, what happened?"

"The Lord settled it with me," he said, "I told him how bitter I was that the President should receive a tremendous homecoming, when no one met us as we returned home. And when I finished, it seems as though the Lord put his arm on my shoulder and simply said, "But son, you're not home yet!"

You won't be in heaven for thirty seconds, if you're believer, and you will say, "Why on earth did I get discouraged when I knew what was coming? Why didn't I serve more, pray more, give more, love more, be more what God wanted me to be?" You're not home yet. Remember your future.