

EPHESIANS 3:20–21

Abundantly More

SMALL GROUP SERMON OUTLINE & DISCUSSION GUIDE

KEY PASSAGE • Ephesians 3:20–21

PURPOSE

To move beyond the exhausting pursuit of worldly “more” and learn to trust the God whose power is already at work within His people. This study invites the group to see life from an eternal perspective, remember its identity in Christ, and surrender to whatever God’s “abundantly more” may be.

BIG IDEA God’s “abundantly more” is not a larger version of our limited desires. It is His gracious work beyond what we can ask or imagine, accomplished through His power within us and directed toward His glory in the church.

SERMON OUTLINE AS PREACHED

- **The “Carrot on a Stick” Metaphor** : The world trains us to chase the next achievement, possession, or circumstance. That pursuit promises satisfaction but often leaves us frustrated, detached from God’s purpose, and always reaching for something else.
- **Shifting Perspective: Temporal vs. Eternal** : Drawing from 2 Corinthians 4:16, believers are urged to look beyond the decline and pressures of the outer self and attend to God’s renewing work in the inner self.
- **Reviewing Known Theology** : Ephesians 1–3 grounds believers in truths they can know: chosen, adopted, redeemed, forgiven, sealed, made alive, reconciled, and brought near in Christ. These known blessings prepare us to trust God with what exceeds our understanding.
- **Old Testament Symbols** : The sermon traces the Blood, the Law, the Wall, and the Temple as signs fulfilled in Christ and His people: atonement through blood, the Spirit within, hostility broken down, and the church becoming God’s dwelling place.
- **The “End-Around” Prayer** : Because God’s “abundantly more” exceeds our ability to ask or think, the faithful response is surrender: “God, I do not know what Your more is, but I want what You want.” We trust the divine power, dunamis, already working within us.

OPENING CONNECTION

Share a time when you felt you were chasing a “carrot on a stick.” What did you hope it would give you, and how did the pursuit affect your relationship with God?

READ TOGETHER • EPHESIANS 3:20–21 AND 2 CORINTHIANS 4:16–18

As the passages are read aloud, listen for what they say about God’s power, our perspective, and the purpose of His work.

1 The Pursuit of “More” | Ephesians 3:20

The sermon contrasts the world’s restless pursuit of more with God’s “abundantly more.” Worldly more keeps the desired object just out of reach. God’s more begins with His character, His purpose, and His power rather than our attempts to secure satisfaction.

- What “carrots” most often capture people’s attention today: achievement, security, approval, comfort, possessions, influence, or something else?
- How can a good desire become spiritually unhealthy when it becomes the thing we believe will finally satisfy us?

- What is the difference between asking God to help us obtain our version of “more” and trusting Him to define what “more” should be?

KEY TRUTH Worldly “more” keeps us reaching; God’s “more” calls us to rest in His power and purpose.

2 Renewed on the Inside | 2 Corinthians 4:16–18

Paul does not deny outward weakness or painful circumstances. He places them within an eternal frame. Even when the outer self is wasting away, God can renew the inner self day by day and prepare His people for an eternal weight of glory.

- What outer-self pressures are most likely to dominate your attention right now: health, finances, work, family, aging, disappointment, or uncertainty?
- What are specific, practical ways to nurture the inner self when outward circumstances remain difficult?
- How can we acknowledge suffering honestly without allowing temporary circumstances to define the whole story?

KEY TRUTH Faith does not ignore present trouble; it sees present trouble in light of God’s eternal work.

3 Remember What God Has Already Done | Ephesians 1–3

Before Paul speaks about what exceeds human thought, he has spent three chapters declaring what believers can know. In Christ we are chosen, adopted, redeemed, forgiven, sealed by the Spirit, made alive by grace, reconciled into one body, and granted access to the Father.

- Which spiritual blessing from Ephesians 1–3 most strengthens you in your current walk with God, and why?
- How does remembering what God has already done help us trust Him with what we cannot yet understand?
- Which truth from Ephesians 1–3 are you most prone to forget when life becomes difficult?

4 Blood, Law, Wall, and Temple | The Story Fulfilled in Christ

The sermon uses four Old Testament symbols to show the movement of God’s saving plan. The blood points to life given in atonement. The law points forward to inward renewal by the Spirit. The wall of hostility is broken down as Jews and Gentiles become one family. The temple expands from a building to a people in whom God dwells.

- Which symbol most clearly helps you understand your identity in Christ: the Blood, the Law, the Wall, or the Temple? Why?
- How does the image of the church as God’s dwelling place change the way we view other believers and participate in congregational life?
- Where do you see a continuing need for Christ to break down walls of hostility in the church or in your relationships?

KEY TRUTH God’s saving work does more than improve individuals; it creates a reconciled people in whom He dwells.

Paul praises the God who is able to do far beyond all we ask or think, according to the power at work within us. Since God’s “more” exceeds our imagination, the sermon proposes a prayer of yielded trust: “I do not know what Your more is, but I want it. Accomplish Your will in me.”

- Why is surrender often harder than asking God for a specific outcome?
- If you prayed, “I do not know what Your more is, but I want what You want,” what area of life would be hardest to release?
- What might an “end-around” prayer look like in your life this week?
- Ephesians 3:21 directs glory to God “in the church and in Christ Jesus.” How does this keep “abundantly more” from becoming a promise of private success or comfort?
- How can our group support one another in the daily practice of surrendering our will to God’s will?

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Complete this prayer in your own words: “God, I have been asking You for _____. Today I surrender the outcome to You and ask You to accomplish Your abundantly more by Your power at work within me.”

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Personal: Each day this week, pray Ephesians 3:20–21 slowly. Name one desire you are releasing, one truth from Ephesians 1–3 you are remembering, and one way you will cooperate with the Spirit’s inner work.

Group: Choose one practical way to encourage inner renewal rather than merely offering quick solutions to outward circumstances. Follow up with one another during the week.

PRAY TOGETHER

Praise God for His power. Thank Him for the blessings already given in Christ. Confess the “carrots” that compete for your trust. Ask God to renew the inner person, tear down dividing walls, make the church a faithful dwelling place, and accomplish His abundantly more for His glory.

MAIN TAKEAWAY

God’s abundantly more is His powerful work beyond our limited asking and thinking, renewing us within and glorifying Him through the church.

“To him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations.” — Ephesians 3:21