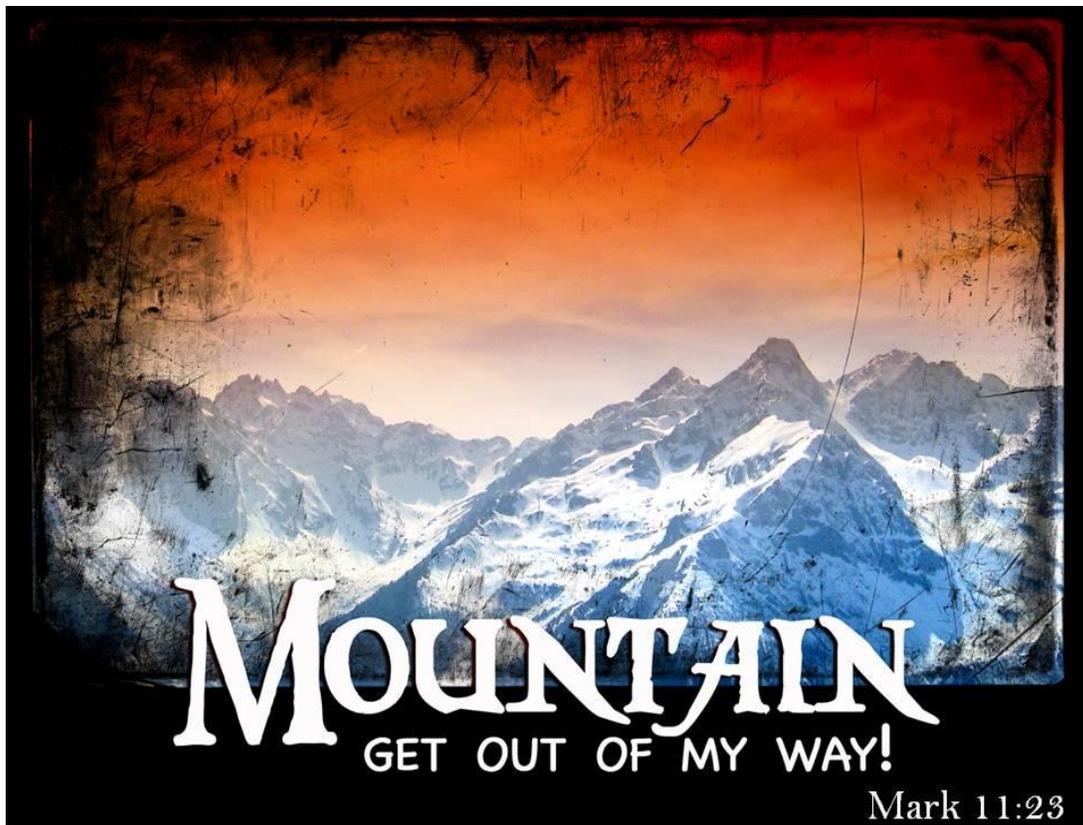


Moving Mountains

A Lesson on Faith



By: Rev. Tim Lukings

Moving Mountains

Introduction

The scripture is loaded with promises of what seems to be the impossible. From a human perspective, they are; but as the angel informed Mary when telling her of her future child's virgin birth: *"For with God nothing shall be impossible."* (Luke 1:37, KJV)

He is God and we are; well ...just us. Look at what Jesus said: *"Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. **Nothing will be impossible for you.**"* (Matthew 17:20, NIV) Faith in God opens the door to all of His resources. Imagine walking through heaven. You come across a huge door with a sign in big bold letters, and over top of it, it says: ***"Entrance to The Impossible. Everyone Welcome"***. If your first thought is, *"I could never open that huge door"*, any attempt to do so will prove you correct. You can turn the door handle, then push or pull until you are blue in the face, but the door will not open. But, if your first thought is, *"I am in the presence of God. The sign says everyone is*

welcome. In God's presence all things are possible, so I can open that door", you turn the nob and give the door a push. With ease, the doorway to the impossible now stands open before you. That's how faith works. Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and it will be done. (Matthew 21:21, NIV)

The writer to the Hebrews gives us the perfect definition of faith. There is no need for us to look elsewhere to understand what faith is. *"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."* (Hebrews 11:1, NASB) Instead of 'assurance', the King James Version uses the word 'substance'. That's faith! It's knowing that you have what God has promised before you have it.

The promises in God's Word are applicable to us all as people of faith. They are absolute. When it comes to things that pertain to God's specific will for our lives as individuals, it takes discernment, prayer, and intentionally seeking the will of God.

Over time, faith has become a bit of a battleground in the church. The thing that has led to extremes on both ends of the spectrum is a lack of understanding that, although the definition of faith

never changes, there are different ways to apply our faith in different circumstances. Real faith is always the same. Faith is faith. It is always ‘the assurance of things hoped for, and the conviction of things not seen’. We need to simply make certain that what “we hope for” is the will and promise of God; and not our own desires. Sometimes the object of our faith is different than God’s best for our lives.

Mountain Moving Faith

*“Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. **Nothing will be impossible for you.**” (Matthew 17:20, NIV)*

There are some great biblical examples of mountain moving faith. Of course, when the bible speaks of mountains it isn’t speaking of literal mountains. It is speaking of problems bigger than our self. It is speaking of issues and challenges bigger than we can handle in our own natural abilities. It is speaking of people, circumstances, and things that get in the way of us doing the will of God. It is speaking of mountains like this:

- Noah was instructed to build a massive Ark, big enough to house 2 of every kind of animal on the earth, and suitable as living quarters for over a year. It was a giant of a mountain. There was an approximate 120-year span from the time Noah was instructed to begin the project until the flood waters came.
- David stood in front of Goliath, a mountain of a man, with a slingshot and 5 stones from a nearby brook. He was in full armour, had a sword at his side, a huge spear in his hand, and an armour bearer that went ahead of him. *“David said to the Philistine, “You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.” (1 Samuel 17:45, NIV).* With one stone, David took Goliath down.
- Moses and the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob stood at the edge of the Red Sea. The massive and powerful Egyptian army had come to round them up. Moses, as instructed by God, raised his staff and stretched his hand out over the sea. The waters parted in two and 2,000,000 people were saved.

You get the idea. Each of those challenges were like insurmountable mountains to those involved, and yet, by faith, God's will was done.

If God had to move a literal mountain, He certainly could. The lesson here, however, is that there is no challenge too big, no enemy too fierce, and no problem too complex for God to handle when you have faith. "*Nothing will be impossible for you.*" It is a combined effort.

In His Name

John 14:11-14, NIV *"Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves.*

12 Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.

13 And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

14 You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it."

Stop for a moment and think of the things Jesus had been doing, the things that those He was speaking to had seen or would see. Every kind of sickness was healed, blind eyes and deaf ears were opened, demonic spirits were cast out, the winds and

waves obeyed Him, He walked on water, He fed the multitudes, and He turned water into wine. All that paled in comparison to the raising of a dead young man from out of his casket or calling Lazarus out of his tomb after having been dead four days. Now let's read this again: *“Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and **they will do even greater things than these**, because I am going to the Father.”* That's a pretty wild statement! But it is imperative that we understand the next two verses. *“And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.”*

Before going to Bible College, I worked as Accounting Supervisor for a corrugated box plant. One day, a man from California, doing business on the company's behalf arrived at our plant. The General Manager requested that I go to the bank we dealt with (which happened to be the same bank I dealt with personally) and get a bank draft for tens of thousands of dollars for this man's use. I did as asked, and there were no issues as I requested the money in the name of the company I was representing. If I had asked for the same amount of money for personal use, the bank would have laughed in my face.

The way to move mountains is to do spiritual business in the Name of the One we represent and not confuse it with our own business, our own desire, our own will. Asking in the Name of Jesus is more than just ending our prayer with: *“In Jesus’ Name we pray”*. To ask in His Name means to first know His will, and second, to be doing His business, not ours.

When representing the company I worked for, if I attempted to use company resources for personal use I would be charged with fraud. Yet, as Christians we attempt to use the power in Jesus’ Name and the resources of heaven for personal use all the time. It must be the other way around. We use our lives to do the work of the one we represent. The Apostle Paul defined us, in **2 Corinthians 5:20** as *“Christ’s ambassadors”*.

But, doesn’t God want to bless us? Doesn’t God love to open the windows of heaven and pour out blessings on His children? He sure does. But how and when is His business. Our first prayer should always be for a revelation of His will.

To move mountains, and to do the same kind of miraculous work that Jesus had been doing; we must remember that we work for Him. He doesn’t work for us.

The Power of Words

Matthew 18:19-20 *“Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about **anything they ask for, it will be done for them** by my Father in heaven. **20** For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.”*

There it is again. Don't miss it. *“For where two or three **gather in my name, there am I with them.**”* If you miss it, you will believe that you simply need to find one other person to agree with you for anything your imagination can muster, and God has obligated Himself to give it to you.

God is not obligated to our faith. We are obligated to focus our faith on doing the will of God. That is the key that unlocks the door to all of the resources of heaven. This means that seeking God's will in any given situation should be our first prayer. When our faith discovers and is fixated on God's will, it puts us in a position of being a spokesperson through which His will can be declared, ambassadors through which His plan can be carried out, and conduits through which His power can flow.

The practice Jesus is teaching us here is very powerful. When two people seek the will of God, and they share the revelation of what that is; there is a confidence – even a certainty of what God's desire is in whatever situation you are praying for. In that

case, you can boldly proclaim His will with certainty. “*Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.*” (**Hebrews 11:1, NASB**). The witness you have to what the will of God is converts confidence into conviction. You are so certain of it that your words reflect that certainty. You speak and act in a way that reflects what you **know** about God’s will. Your proclamation of such does not control or obligate God, but is a statement of faith that He will carry out His will as He has revealed it to you.

Useful Faith

James 2:19-26, NIV *You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.*

20 *You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless?*

21 *Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar?*

22 *You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did.*

23 *And the scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,” and he was called God’s friend.*

24 *You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone.*

Real faith, directed toward the will of God, not only changes the way we talk, but it changes the way we act. Noah's faith caused him to build a boat. Moses' faith caused him to stretch his hand out over the sea, and the waters parted. In obedience, Abraham took his only child, the child in whom ALL of the promises of God rested, to offer as a sacrifice. He did it in obedience, expecting that God had a plan that included provision for the sacrifice. God did. Elijah's faith caused him to have excessive amounts of water poured out over the altar before calling fire down from heaven.

Once we know the will of God, we believe it will happen, talk as if it will happen, and behave as if it will happen. Every single demon in hell believes that God can do miracles. What good comes out of that faith? None! It is useless faith. When our faith changes our behaviour, when we do our part in fulfilling the will of God in our situation, then our faith becomes useful. God wants you to be an active participant in the provision of the miracle you are believing for. That requires your availability that is revealed through your actions. It requires obedience. It requires you acting in such a way that God can work in and through your life.

Faith in Trials

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 *Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me.*

8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me.

9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

10 That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

There are some questions that arise from this passage that we won't discuss in this little booklet. Things like...

- What was the Apostle Paul's thorn in the flesh?
- What did Paul mean by saying that it was a messenger of Satan?
- Was this a situation similar to that of Job's?

Nope! We're not going there! The reason is that they aren't the important part of the story. The important part of the story is that the Apostle Paul prayed until he heard the will of God. He accepted it, and walked in faith for a different kind of miracle than he initially prayed for. His faith was directed

toward this promise: *“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”* Paul believed it, and boldly proclaimed it. *“Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.”*

Paul understood that, what many would look at as a trial, was actually a blessing. His thorn in the flesh put Him in a place of dependency on God. Paul’s normal response to most situations in life would be to rely on His own abilities. As intelligent and capable as Paul was, his abilities didn’t compare to God’s. God told him that his ‘thorn’ would keep him in a position of dependence on His strength. As long as he was left with this ‘unknown thing that he calls a thorn’, he would be continually reliant on God; which was a position of great strength.

This is a difficult concept for many to understand. The fact is that God is more concerned about your spiritual well-being than anything else. Thank God that He is. At heaven’s judgment seat there will be no discussion about whether or not we had a disease, or what kind of house we lived in, or what kind of car we drove. Those things won’t matter. We will be judged by the condition of our spirit and whether or not it reflects the presence and the character of the Spirit of God.

God prioritizes the spiritual when laying out His will for our lives. (This can be a bigger issue than this. I encourage you to read my booklet entitled: ‘Why NOT Me Lord?’). Why wouldn’t He? Of course He wants to bless us in this lifetime. He is our Father. Still, the spirit is eternal, the physical and material are temporal. In the Apostle Paul’s case, the ‘thorn’ kept him from the sin of pride. Anything that keeps us from sin is a blessing.

God is not the cause of our problems, but as **Romans 8:28-29 (NIV)** says, He can utilize every situation in our life for our spiritual good. *“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. 29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be **conformed to the image of his Son.**”* The best good that can come from any trial is that we be conformed to the image of His Son. God will work toward that end if we are called according to His purpose; and if our first prayer is to know His will.

Lord, I believe. Help me in my Unbelief

Mark 9:14-29 (NIV) *When they came to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd around them and the teachers of the law arguing with them.*

15 *As soon as all the people saw Jesus, they were overwhelmed with wonder and ran to greet him.*

16 *“What are you arguing with them about?” he asked.*

17 *A man in the crowd answered, “Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech.*

18 *Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not.”*

19 *“You unbelieving generation,” Jesus replied, “How long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me.”*

20 *So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth.*

21 *Jesus asked the boy’s father, “How long has he been like this?” “From childhood,” he answered.*

22 *“It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us.”*

23 *“if you can?” said Jesus. “Everything is possible for one who believes.”*

24 *Immediately the boy’s father exclaimed, “I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!”*

25 When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the impure spirit. “You deaf and mute spirit,” he said, “I command you, come out of him and never enter him again.”

26 The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out. The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said, “He’s dead.”

27 But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet, and he stood up.

28 After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, “Why couldn’t we drive it out?”

29 He replied, “This kind can come out only by prayer.”

I’m quite certain that many struggle in the same way the boy’s father struggled. We believe that God can do anything, but we have a hard time applying that faith to our current situation. ***“I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!”***

We know God is omnipotent, or all-powerful. We know He is the creator of this universe. We believe what the Apostle Paul wrote about Jesus: *“The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.”* (Colossians 1:15-17, NIV) Applying that faith is easy in some circumstances, and not in others. Why?

Believe it or not, some people claim to have never witnessed a genuine miracle. Others have, but have never seen someone healed of cancer, or stand up out of a wheel chair. Some have never seen a blind eye see, or a deaf ear hear. They believe Jesus can do those things because they read about it in the Bible; and they believe the Bible to be truth. They believe in the omnipotence of God. But they have a problem applying that faith to a specific situation because it hasn't been in the realm of their experience.

When we have seen God perform a certain kind of miracle, it makes it easier for us to apply faith in a similar situation the next time we come across it. Our experience builds faith that God can and will do the miraculous in that kind of situation. But, when we have never seen God do a specific thing, our faith that **He will** do it struggles to line up with our faith that **He can**.

Here is a biblical example of what I mean. Peter and the other disciples saw Jesus walking on the water toward their boat. This happened: *“Lord, if it’s you,” Peter replied, “tell me to come to you on the water.”* **29** *“Come,” he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus.*” (**Matthew 14:28-**

29, NIV). Peter was doing it. He had seen Jesus walk on water, so he walked on water. He kept his eyes on Jesus, and started walking toward Him. I'm sure his faith got stronger with every step. But then the wind came up. He now had experienced walking on water, but then the wind came. He had walked on water, but he had never walked on water when it was windy. He had faith enough to get out of the boat, but he didn't know how to apply that faith in this new circumstance. His faith quickly dissipated, and he began to sink. *"But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"* 31 *Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"* (Matthew 14:30-31, NIV)

Peter had more faith than all of the other disciples. He is the only one that stepped out of the boat. *"I do believe."* When the winds came, *"help me overcome my unbelief."*

To the man looking to Jesus for help with his sick, demon possessed son, Jesus responded: *"if you can"? Everything is possible for one who believes."* Here we see two elements to faith. First, we must know that everything is possible. Intellectual awareness of that truth is not usually a problem for most seasoned Christians, but we must know it in our hearts as well

as our minds. Second, we must apply that truth to our current situation, even when we have never seen a miracle like what the situation requires. This is where some run into difficulty.

Faith without Answers

In what is known as the Scripture's 'Faith Chapter', the writer provides an impressive list of biblical characters, and then says, "*All these people were still living by faith when they died. **They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth***" (**Hebrews 11:13, NIV**)

Did God renege on His promises? Absolutely not. Every one of His promises were fulfilled, and every one of the people listed, acted and talked as if the promise would be fulfilled until the day they died. Their faith in God's promise was substance. They knew the will of God and behaved accordingly.

Sometimes there is a tendency for us to write off the things we are believing for - if they don't happen in our time frame. When the fulfilment of what we once 'knew' to be God's will seems unlikely or impossible, there is a tendency to lose faith.

Abraham died with a promise of a great nation through whom the whole world would be blessed, but he had only one son when he died. We know, looking back, that God did fulfil that promise. It took 600 years to establish Abraham's seed as the nation of Israel. Out of that nation came our Saviour, the one through whom the whole world has been blessed. Israel is a nation that has survived the grip of multiple empires throughout history. Most recently, it seemed like the Roman Empire completely destroyed the people of promise once and for all. For 1878 years there was no nation of Israel. But, miraculously, in 1948 the Jews found their way back to the Promised Land and were recognized as a nation once again. Their language, culture, and religion have all remained intact after nearly 2,000 years. Truly amazing. The promise is still a reality, despite the many challenges Israel has faced, God has preserved the promise that He made to Abraham.

God is faithful to His promises. We must be faithful as well. Don't lose faith. If your faith is limited to your own timeline and personal thoughts about how God will respond; you may very well find that your faith starts to weaken when God behaves differently than you expect. Continue to walk in His will based on the promises He has made you.

Conclusion

Nothing is impossible with God. Period. He created everything we know, and it all continues to exist because of Him.

If He created a mountain, He can move a mountain. The thing is, the mountains in our lives are not usually literal mountains, or things God created. They are people. They are giants like Goliath. They are circumstances. They are messengers of Satan, thorns in the flesh. They can be whatever seems to be in the way of getting the will of God done.

When our purpose in life is to do the will of God, to live for Him, we have the authority of His Name to do His will. If that means moving a mountain, then we have the authority to tell it to move. When our first prayer is to know His will, in any given situation, that knowledge changes the way we talk and act. They are words and actions rooted in faith, the assurance of things not yet seen. We speak and act in a way that reflects that the promises God has made to us are true. Those promises can come from His Word, or to us personally by the Holy Spirit. Jesus may not tell you to walk on water, but he may have you do things you've never seen before, and you find yourself saying: *“Lord, I believe. Help me in my unbelief.”* Keep walking the walk of faith. Keep

talking the talk. When it is within the plan and will of God, nothing is impossible with Him.