

Mark 6:30-44

I am sure we have all the day where we have a long day at work and we get home and are exhausted and just want to sit down, relax, have dinner preferably cooked by someone else and go to bed early. But then there are the days when as soon as we sit down, something comes up that prevents us from us from relaxing as we had hoped. I remember one day when I got home to relax only to get a call from a parent that one of the children I work with was struggling. So I went out to help support them. I don't mind doing it but it doesn't give me the down time I needed.

Other times we get asked to do something only to get caught up in the details. How are we going to afford it? We don't have the skills to do it? We get caught up in the logistical aspects and try to make sure we don't bite off more than we can chew. The tasks sometimes seem impossible. There are many time in the bible where people get caught up in the details of how something is going to happen. Things that seem impossible.

In Luke 1:35-37, in response to Mary's question "How will this be since I am a virgin?", the angel replies "The holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the most high will over shadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God."

In Matthew 19: 16-28, just a little while later, a rich man asks Jesus what must he do to get eternal life. Jesus replies for him to obey the commandments. But the rich man had done all that, and asked what else he lacked. Jesus told him "if you want to be perfect, go sell your possessions

and give to the poor and then you will have treasure in heaven. Then come and follow me. The man could not do this and went away.

Jesus turned to his disciples and told them “that it will be easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” The disciples were greatly astonished, thinking that this was impossible, and asked him, “who then can be saved.” Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

Time after time Jesus tells his disciples that all they need to have is faith. They need to trust God, and remember that while to humans, it may seem impossible that with God it is possible. There are no limits to what he can do. By our unbelief, we are not able to see all that is possible.

During the summers while I was in college, I worked at Camp Fowler, one of the Reformed Church in America’s summer camps in the Adirondack Mountains. During the second summer that I worked at there, I was asked to do something that then seemed impossible. I was asked to announce that there was fruit available for dessert. Now it doesn’t seem like such a big deal, but then I was sure that what had been asked of me was an impossible task. I just knew that my voice would not be loud enough to be heard.

We were on the beach for a picnic, and I was one of the people assigned to the kitchen that day to help with the serving. We had eaten dinner and now I noticed that no one seemed to notice that there was fruit available for dessert. So I told Scot, the other person in the kitchen that day that it should be announced assuming that he would do it, but to my surprise and horror, he told me that I should stand on the bench and make the announcement myself. That day I absolutely refused to do it, I wasn’t even

going to try. Scot tried for quite a while to get me to do it. He kept encouraging me, telling me that I could do it. But I continued to refuse to do it.

At one point the camp's director came over and asked what was going on. I explained to him that someone needed to make an announcement about the fruit for dessert. The camp director moved to make the announcement, but Scot stopped him, telling him "Kirsten needs to do it." So the program director never made the announcement. That day no one made the announcement because I wouldn't do it. No one even knew there was fruit available for dessert. I was so sure that it was impossible for people on the beach to even notice that I was making an announcement, much less for me to be heard making it that I never did it. I didn't trust myself, much less trust God or did I leave him room to act.

When we face impossible seeming circumstances, we need to remember to turn to God and ask help, believing that what we ask is possible. We need to trust God. We need to know in our hearts that if God has called us to do this task, then he will also provide ways for it to be done. It won't always be easy and it won't always be fun. There are times when it will feel overwhelming. But we always need to make sure that we turn to God. We need to make sure that we always leave room for Him to work in the situation.

Not doing anything as I did at Camp Fowler didn't leave God any place to work. I didn't trust him, I only thought of myself as I perceived myself and my abilities and didn't look any farther. As my mom once said, "Difficult times, impossible tasks or not always visible projects. I think some decisions that must be made ask impossible choices of us, but prayer helps. It works. It works to quote some devotion in our women's devotional

bibles.” We need to keep the communication lines open between God and man. The way that we do that is prayer. We must ask for the help that we need.

I am not sure where I read the following story or where I might have heard it; it may have been from the Guideposts magazine. It is about a congregation that built a new church. The week they were to have their first service in the building, the inspector came to do the final inspection. The building was fine, but he said that they did not have enough parking. Until they had more, they would not be able to use the building. There was no where else to go to expand the parking lot. On one side was their property line, the other was the road, third was the building and the fourth one was a big hill. There was no way they were going to be able to adding any more parking spaces to their parking lot.

The pastor decided to take a leap of faith. He decided to plan on having the service anyway that Sunday in the new building. The only thing that they could do was to pray. So he called a prayer meeting for the congregation to ask God to move that hill, their Mountain. Most people were pretty skeptical. I can imagine their anger and disbelief in finding out that they couldn't use this building. All this planning and building, and we can not even open? Such a waste! What happened? Whose fault is it? And there is nothing we can do. No place to expand the parking lot. It's hopeless. We built a useless building.

Very few people showed up at the meeting. It was only a small handful of skeptics. They spent time in prayer, asking God to move their mountain so that they could have a service that Sunday. They probably went away not believing that anything would happen. They didn't see how anybody including God could move the hill.

But the next day, a man came into the church. He went to the pastor and introduced himself as part of a construction team working in the next town. They had run into a problem and didn't have enough clean fill for the project. Would it be possible that they would be able to have the dirt composed the hill next to their parking lot? In return they would pave the area for the church. And so the mountain was moved.

As I think about that story, I wonder how many of us would have done attended that prayer meeting. Would you have gone to prayer meeting that the pastor called so that they could "move the mountain", believing that God could do what you were asking? Or would you have gone, but not believing God could do it. Your presence at the meeting not being a step in faith, but a defiant challenge? OR maybe you would have been one of those people who knew that it wouldn't happen so why waste your time attending the meeting. You have a lot better things to do.

I know what I would have liked my response to be; I would like to say that I would have gone knowing that because we asked, the mountain was already moved. But in all likelihood, I would not have gone for that reason. Would I have gone anyway, or would I have been one of those who stayed home? I don't know, but each of us needs to ask ourselves the question of what our response would have been.

I wonder how the disciples felt. They had returned from their trips which Jesus had sent them on. They were processing everything that had been said and done. Jesus to give them time, took them to a deserted place where they could relax. But the crowds found them and followed them out to this deserted place. Jesus took compassion on people whom he described as sheep without a shepherd. Lost sheep. The disciples were keeping track of time and were focused on the details. They pointed out the time to

Jesus, thinking that people should be sent away to get food and find a place to sleep since they weren't near a town, but instead Jesus asked them,,
“Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?” Can you imagine what it must have been like for the disciples when Jesus asked this question? First of all they had no money. IT would have taken more than even one days wages to feed everyone. Second of all where would you be able to buy enough bread for this many people at this short notice? Jesus didn't respond to the question he simply asked them to find out what was available.

They looked around and found 5 loaves and two fish Not very much for just the disciples much less a crowd of 5000. Then Jesus took the bread and broke it and distributed it along with the fish. He took the little and not only made it enough to feed the whole crowd, but there were twelve baskets leftover. Not only did everybody have something to eat – everybody was filled. And there were 12 baskets left over.

We need to always remember God and put him first. We need to focus first not on the details and first ask ourselves what does God want us to do? Even if we are exhausted, does he want us to have compassion and reach out? If we follow God's will he will always provide for our needs if we are obedient to him and listen for his voice in the world. For with God nothing is impossible no matter how difficult it may seem.

We can only do one bit at a time. Next time that I am asked to do something that I think is impossible for me to do, I need to at least stand up and try. I need to announce that there is fruit, even if I don't think that I will be heard. I need to attend the prayed meeting believing that it can be done; I need to offer the one small lunch to feed the crowd. If I do that not only might I discover it wasn't as impossible as it looked, but I also have left room for the hand of God to work through me.

